

W. H. H. H. H.

1507/615

THE
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL,

A
COMEDY;

AS IT IS PERFORMED

AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL

IN
D R U R Y - L A N E

D U B L I N:
PRINTED IN THE YEAR

M DCC LXXXII.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

M E N.

Sir Peter Teazle,	-	Mr KING.
Sir Oliver Surface,	-	Mr YATES.
Joseph Surface,	- -	Mr PALMER.
Charles,	- -	Mr SMITH.
Crabtree,	- -	Mr PARSONS.
Sir Benjamin Backbite,		Mr DODD.
Rowley,	- -	Mr AIKEN.
Sir Toby Bumper,	-	Mr VERNON.
Moses,	- -	Mr BADDELEY.
Careless,	- -	Mr JEFFERSON.
Trip,	- -	Mr LA MASH.
Snake,	- -	Mr PACKER.

W O M E N.

Lady Teazle,	- -	Mrs ABINGDON.
Maria,	- -	Mrs BRERETON.
Lady Sneerwell,	-	Mrs HOPKINS.
Mrs Candour,	-	Miss POPE.

S C E N E, L O N D O N.



THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

A C T I.

SCENE, Lady SNEERWELL's House.

Lady SNEERWELL and SNAKE, discovered at a Tea Table.

Lady SNEERWELL.

THE paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted.

Snake. They were, madam; and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion from whence they came.

L. Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish, in the common course of things. I think it must reach Mrs. Clacket's ears within twenty-four hours, and then the business, you know, is as good as done.

L. Sneer. Why, yes, Mrs. Clacket has talents, and a good deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day; to my knowledge she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, as many close confinements, nine separate maintenances, and two divorces; nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tete a tete* in the Town and Country Magazine, when the parties never saw one another before in their lives.

L. Sneer. Why, yes, she has genius, but her manner is too gross.

Snake. True, madam; she has a fine tongue, and a bold invention; but then her colouring is too dark, and the outlines rather too extravagant; she wants that delicacy of hint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

L. Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; every body will allow that

Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look, than many others with the most laboured detail, even though they accidentally happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

L. Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake, and I'll not deny the pleasure I feel at the success of my schemes; (*both rise*) wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess nothing can give me greater satisfaction, than reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. True, madam; but there is one affair, in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess at your motives.

L. Sneer. I presume you mean with regard to my friend Sir Peter Teazle, and his family.

Snake. I do; here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest the most dissipated, wild, extravagant young fellow in the world; the former, an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly admired by her: Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a large fortune, should not immediately close with the passion of a man of such character and expectation as Mr. Surface; and more so, why you are so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

L. Sneer. Then at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you, that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No! —

L. Sneer. No: His real views are to Maria, or her fortune, while in his brother he finds a favoured rival; he is, therefore, obliged to mask his real intentions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself for his success.

L. Sneer. Heavens! how dull you are! Can't you surmise a weakness I have hitherto, through shame, concealed even from you? Must I confess it, that Charles, that profligate, that libertine, that bankrupt in fortune

and reputation, that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious; and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing.

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but pray, how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

L. Sneer. For our mutual interest; he pretends to, and recommends, sentiment and liberality; but I know him to be artful, close, and malicious. In short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with most of his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of virtue, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes, I know Sir Peter vows he has not his fellow in England, and has praised him as a man of character and sentiment.

L. Sneer. Yes; and with the appearance of being sentimental, he has brought Sir Peter to favour his addresses to Maria, while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though I fear he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Surface, madam.

L. Sneer. Shew him up; (*Exit servant*) he generally calls about this hour—I don't wonder at people's giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Jos. Lady Sneerwell, good morning to you—Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

L. Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me upon our attachment, but I have told him our real views; I need not tell you how useful he has been to us, and believe me, our confidence has not been ill placed.

Jos. Oh, madam, 'tis impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's merit and accomplishments.

L. Sneer. Oh, no compliments; but tell me when you saw Maria, or, what's more material to us, your brother.

Jos. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can tell you they never met; some of your stories have had a good effect in that quarter.

L. Sneer. The merit of this, my dear Snake; belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Every hour. I am told he had another execution in his house yesterday—In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed any thing I ever heard.

L. Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Aye, poor Charles indeed! notwithstanding his extravagance, one cannot help pitying him; I wish it was in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not feel for the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves to be——

L. Sneer. Now you are going to be moral, and forget you are among friends.

Jos. Gad, so I was, ha! ha!—I'll keep that sentiment 'till I see Sir Peter, ha! ha! however, it would certainly be a generous act in you to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed at all, can only be so by a person of your superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming; I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to your ladyship. Mr. Surface, your most obedient. *[Exit.]*

Jos. Mr. Snake, your most obedient. I wonder, Lady Sneerwell, you would put any confidence in that fellow.

L. Sneer. Why so?

Jos. I have discovered he has of late had several conferences with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward; he has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

L. Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Not unlikely; and take my word for it, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow has not virtue enough to be faithful to his own villainies.

Enter MARIA.

L. Sneer. Ah, Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Nothing, madam, only this odious lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and his uncle Crabtree, just called in at my guardian's; but I took the first opportunity to slip out, and run away to your ladyship.

L. Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Had my brother Charles been of the party, you would not have been so much alarmed.

L. Sneer. Nay, now you are too severe; for I dare say the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you was here, and therefore came; but pray, Maria, what par-

ticular objection have you to Sir Benjamin that you avoid him so?

Mar. Oh, madam, he has done nothing; but his whole conversation is a perpetual libel upon all his acquaintance.

Jos. Yes, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him, for he would abuse a stranger as soon as his best friend, and his uncle is as bad.

Mar. For my part, I own wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice,—— what think you, Mr. Surface?

Jos. To be sure, madam,—to smile at a jest, that plants a thorn in the breast of another, is to become a principal in the mischief.

L. Sneer. Psha—there is no possibility of being witty without a little ill-nature; the malice in a good thing is the barb that makes it stick.——What is your real opinion, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Why, my opinion is, that where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, the conversation must be naturally insipid.

Mar. Well, I will not argue how far slander may be allowed; but in a man, I am sure, it is despicable.—— We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand motives to deprecate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman, before he can traduce once.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mrs. Candour, madam, if you are at leisure, will leave her carriage.

L. Sneer. Desire her to walk up. *(Exit servant.)* Now, Maria, here's a character to your taste; though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, yet every body allows she is the best natured sort of woman in the world.

Mar. Yes—with the very gross affectation of good nature, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Faith it's very true; and whenever I hear the current of abuse running hard against the characters of my best friends, I never think them in such danger, as when Mrs. Candour undertakes their defence.

L. Sneer. Hush! hush! here she is.

Enter Mrs. CANDOUR.

Mrs. Cand. Oh! my dear Lady Sneerwell; well, how

do you do? Mr. Surface, your most obedient.—Is there any news abroad? No! nothing good I suppose—No! nothing but scandal!—nothing but scandal!

Jos. Just so indeed, madam.

Mrs. Cand. Nothing but scandal!—Ah, Maria, how do you do child? What, is every thing at an end between you and Charles? What, he is too extravagant.—Ah! the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am sorry, madam, the town is so ill employed.

Mrs. Cand. Aye, so am I child—but what can one do? we can't stop people's tongues.—They hint too, that your guardian and his lady don't live so agreeably together as they did.

Mar. I am sure such reports are without foundation.

Mrs. Cand. Aye, so these things generally are: It's like Mrs. Fashion's affair with Colonel Coterie; though, indeed, that affair was never rightly cleared up; and it was but yesterday Miss Prim assured me, that Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon are now become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted, that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy, and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner.

Jos. The licence of invention, some people give themselves, is astonishing.

Mrs. Cand. 'Tis so—but how will you stop peoples tongues? 'Twas but yesterday Mrs. Clacket informed me, that our old friend, Miss Prudely, was going to elope, and that her guardian caught her just stepping into the York Diligence, with her dancing master. I was informed too, that Lord Flimsy caught his wife at a house of no extraordinary fame, and that Tom Saunter and Sir Harry Idle, were to measure swords on a similar occasion.—But I dare say there is no truth in the story, and I would not circulate such a report for the world.

Jos. You report! No, no, no.

Mrs. Cand. No, no,—tale-bearers are just as bad as the tale-makers.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Benjamin Backbite and Mr. Crabtree.

[*Exit servant.*]

Enter Sir BENJAMIN and CRABTREE.

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, your most obedient humble

servant. Mrs. Candour, I believe you don't know my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite; he has a very pretty taste for poetry, and shall make a rebus or a chirard with any one.

Sir Benj. O fie! uncle.

Crab. In faith he will: did you ever hear the lines he made at Lady Ponto's route, on Mrs. Frizzle's feathers catching fire; and the rebuses—his first is the name of a fish; the next a great naval commander, and—

Sir Benj. Uncle, now pr'ythee.

L. Sner. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish any thing.

Sir Benj. Why, to say the truth, 'tis very vulgar to print—and as my little productions are chiefly satires, and lampoons on particular persons, I find they circulate better by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties;—however, I have some love elegies, which, when favoured by this lady's smiles, (*to Maria*) I mean to give to the public.

Crab. 'Foregad, madam, they'll immortalize you, (*to Maria*) you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir Benj. Yes, madam, I think you'll like them, (*to Maria*) when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto type, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin;—'foregad they'll be the most elegant things of their kind.

Crab. But, odso, Ladies, did you hear the news?

Mrs. Cand. What—do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, madam, that's not it—Miss Nicely going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Cand. Impossible?

Sir Benj. 'Tis very true indeed, madam; every thing is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crab. Yes, and they do say there was very pressing reasons for it.

Mrs. Cand. I heard something of this before.

L. Sner. Oh! it cannot be; and I wonder they'd report such a thing of so prudent a lady.

Sir Benj. Oh! but, madam, that is the very reason that it was believed at once; for she has always been so very cautious and reserved, that every body was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Cand. It is true, there is a sort of puny, sickly

reputation, that would outlive the robusier character of an hundred prudes.

Sir Benj. True, madam; there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Cand. I believe this may be some mistake: you know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances have often given rise to the most ingenious tales.

Crab. Very true;—but odso, ladies, did you hear of Miss Letitia Piper's losing her lover and her character at Scarborough.—Sir Benjamin, you remember it.

Sir Benj. Oh, to be sure, the most whimsical circumstance!

L. Smeer. Pray let us hear it.

Crab. Why, one evening, at Lady Spadille's assembly the conversation happened to turn upon the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country; no, says a Lady present, I have seen an instance of it, for a cousin of mine, Miss Letitia Piper, had one that produced twins. What, what, says old lady Dundizzy, (whom we all know is as deaf as a post) has Miss Letitia Piper had twins.—This, you may easily imagine, set the company in a loud laugh; and the next morning it was every where reported, and believed, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and girl.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Crab. 'Tis true, upon my honour—Oh, Mr. Surface, how do you do? I hear your uncle, Sir Oliver, is expected in town; sad news upon his arrival, to hear how your brother has gone on.

Jos. I hope no busy people have already prejudiced his uncle against him—he may reform.

Sir Benj. True, he may; for my part, I never thought him so utterly void of principle as people say—and though he has lost all his friends, I am told no body is better spoken of amongst the Jews.

Crab. 'Foregad, if the Old Jewry was a ward, Charles would be an alderman, for he pays as many annuities as the Irish Tontine; and when he is sick, they have prayers for his recovery in all the synagogues.

Sir Benj. Yet no man lives in greater splendor.—They tell me, when he entertains his friends, he can sit down

to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antichamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. This may be entertaining to you, gentlemen;—but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Mar. Their malice is intolerable. (*Aside.*) Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning; I'm not very well. [*Exit Maria.*]

Mrs. Cand. She changes colour.

L. Sneer. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her.

Mrs. Cand. To be sure I will;—poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be.

[*Mrs. Candour follows her.*]

L. Sneer. 'Twas nothing, but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Benj. The young lady's penchant is obvious.

Crab. Come, don't let this dishearten you—follow her, and repeat some of your odes to her, and I'll assist you.

Sir Benj. Mr. Surface, I did not come to hurt you, but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. Oh! undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea.

Sir Benj. Every thing is sold, I am told, that was moveable.

Crab. Not a moveable left, except some old bottles, and some pictures, and they seem to be framed in the wainscot, egad.

Sir Benj. I am sorry to hear also some bad stories of him.

Crab. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Benj. But, however, he's your brother.

Crab. Aye! as he is your brother—we'll tell you more another opportunity. *Exeunt Crab. and Sir Benj.*

L. Sneer. 'Tis very hard for them, indeed, to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jos. And I fancy their abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than to Maria.

L. Sneer. I doubt her affections are further engaged than we imagine;—but the family are to be here this afternoon, so you may as well dine where you are; we shall

have an opportunity of observing her further;——in the mean time, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, Sir PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter Sir PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Pet. When an old batchelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect?——'Tis now above six months since my Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men——and I have been the most miserable dog ever since.——We tiffed a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells were done ringing. I was more than once nearly-choaked with gall during the honey-moon, and had lost every satisfaction in life, before my friends had done wishing me joy.——And yet I chose with caution a girl bred wholly in the country, who had never know luxury, beyond one silk gown, or dissipation beyond the annual gala of a race-ball.——Yet now, she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the town, with as good a grace as if she had never seen a bush, or a grass plot out of Grosvenor-square.——I am sneered at by all my acquaintance——paragraphed in the news papers——she dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours——And yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this——but I am determined never to be weak enough to let her know it——No! no! no!

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Sir Peter, your servant, how do you find yourself to day?

Sir Pet. Very bad, Mr. Rowley; very bad indeed.

Rowl. I'm sorry to hear that——what has happened to make you uneasy since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A pretty question truly to a married man.

Rowl. Sure my lady is not the cause!

Sir Pet. Why! has any one told you she was dead?

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Peter, notwithstanding you sometimes dispute and disagree, I am sure you love her.

Sir Pet. Aye, master Rowley; but the worst of it is, that in all our disputes and quarrels, she is ever in the wrong, and continues to thwart and vex me;——I am myself the sweetest tempered man in the world, and so I tell her an hundred times a day.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter!

Sir Pet. Yes—and then there's Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage her to disobedience; and Maria, my ward, she too presumes to have a will of her own, and refuses the man I propose for her; designing, I suppose, to bestow herself and fortune upon that profligate his brother.

Rowl. You know, Sir Peter, I have often taken the liberty to differ in opinion with you, in regard to these two young men; for Charles, my life on't, will retrieve all one day or other.—Their worthy father, my once honoured master, at his years, was full as wild and extravagant as Charles now is; but at his death he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Pet. You are wrong, master Rowley, you are very wrong;—by their father's will, you know, I became guardian to these young men, which gave me an opportunity of knowing their different dispositions; but their uncle's eastern liberality soon took them out of my power, by giving them an early independence.—But for Charles, whatever good qualities he might have inherited, they are long since squandered away with the rest of his fortune;—Joseph, indeed, is a pattern for the young men of the age—a youth of the noblest sentiments, and acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowl. Well, well, Sir Peter, I shan't oppose your opinion at present, though I am sorry you are prejudiced against Charles, as this may probably be the most critical period of his life, for his uncle, Sir Oliver, is arrived, and now in town.

Sir Pet. What! my old friend Sir Oliver, is he arrived? I thought you had not expected him this month.

Rowl. No more we did, Sir, but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Pet. I shall be heartily glad to see him—"Tis sixteen years since old Nol and I met—But does he still enjoin us to keep his arrival a secret from his nephews?

Rowl. He does, Sir; and is determined, under a feigned character, to make trial of their different dispositions.

Sir Pet. Ah! there is no need of it, for Joseph, I am sure, is the man.—But hark'ye, Rowley, does Sir Oliver know that I am married?

Rowl. He does, Sir, and intends shortly to wish you joy.

Sir Pet. What, as we wish health to a friend in a consumption.—But I must have him at my house—do you conduct him, Rowley, I'll go and give orders for his reception. (*going*) We used to rail at matrimony together—he has stood firm to his text.—But Rowley, don't give him the least hint that my wife and I disagree, for I would have him think (Heaven forgive me) that we are a very happy couple.

Rowl. Then you must be careful not to quarrel whilst he is here.

Sir Pet. And so we must—but that will be impossible!—Zounds, Rowley, when an old batchelor marries a young wife, he deserves—aye, he deserves—no—the crime carries the punishment along with it.

ACT II.

SCENE, Sir PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter Sir PETER and Lady TEAZLE.

Sir PETER.

LADY Teazle, Lady Teazle, I won't bear it.

L. Teaz. Very well, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, just as you please; but I know I ought to have my own way in every thing, and what's more, I will.

Sir Pet. What, madam! is there no respect due to the authority of a husband?

L. Teaz. Why, don't I know that no woman of fashion does as she is bid after her marriage.—Though I was bred in the country, I'm no stranger to that: if you wanted me to be obedient, you should have adopted me, and not married me—I'm sure you were old enough.

Sir Pet. Aye, there it is.—Oons, madam, what right have you to run into all this extravagance?

L. Teaz. I'm sure I am not more extravagant than a woman of quality ought to be.

Sir Pet. 'Slife, madam, I'll have no more sums squandered away upon such unmeaning luxuries; you have as many flowers in your dressing-room, as would turn the Pantheon into a green-house; or make a Fete Champetre at a masquerade.

L. Teaz. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame that flowers don't blow in cold weather; you must blame the climate, and not me—I'm sure, for my part, I wish it was

Spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.

Sir Pet. Zounds, madam, I should not wonder at your extravagances if you had been bred to it.—Had you any of these things before you married me?

L. Teaz. Lord, Sir Peter, how can you be angry at those little elegant expences?

Sir Pet. Had you any of those little elegant expences when you married me?

L. Teaz. For my part I think you ought to be pleased your wife should be thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Zounds, madam, you had no taste when you married me.

L. Teaz. Very true, indeed; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again.

Sir Pet. Very well, very well, madam; you have entirely forgot what your situation was when first I saw you.

L. Teaz. No, no, I have not; a very disagreeable situation it was, or I'm sure I never should have married you.

Sir Pet. You forget the humble state I took you from—the daughter of a poor country 'squire.—When I came to your father's, I found you sitting at your tambour, in a linen gown, a bunch of keys to your side, and your hair combed smoothly over a roll.

L. Teaz. Yes, I remember very well;—my daily occupations were to overlook the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap dog.

Sir Pet. Oh! I am glad to find you have so good a recollection.

L. Teaz. My evening employments were to draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; play at Pope Joan with the curate; read a sermon to my aunt Deborah, or perhaps be stuck up at an old spinnet to thrum my father asleep after a fox chase.

Sir Pet. Then you was glad to take a ride out behind the butler, upon the old dock'd coach horse.

L. Teaz. No, no, I deny the butler and the coach horse.

Sir Pet. I say you did. This was your situation—

Now, madam, you must have your coach, vis a vis, and three powdered footmen to walk before your chair; an

summer, two white cats to draw you to Kensington gardens: and instead of your living in that hole in the country, I have brought you home here, made a woman of fortune of you, a woman of quality—In short, madam, I have made you my wife.

L. Teaz. Well, and there is but one thing more you can now do to add to the obligation, and that is——

Sir Pet. To make you my widow, I suppose.

L. Teaz. Hem! ——

Sir Pet. Very well, madam, very well; I am much obliged to you for the hint.

L. Teaz. Why then will you force me to say shocking things to you. But now we have finished our morning conversation, I presume I may go to my engagements at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Pet. Lady Sneerwell!—a precious acquaintance you have made with her too, and the set that frequent her house.—Such a set, mercy on us! Many a wretch who has been drawn upon a hurdle, has done less mischief than those barterers of forged lies, coiners of scandal, and clip-pers of reputation.

L. Teaz. How can you be so severe; I'm sure they are all people of fashion, and very tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, so tenacious of it, they'll not allow it to any but themselves.

L. Teaz. I vow, Sir Peter, when I say an ill-natured thing, I mean no harm by it, for I take it for granted they'd do the same by me.

Sir Pet. They've made you as bad as any of them.

L. Teaz. Yes——I think I bear my part with a tolerable grace——

Sir Pet. Grace, indeed!

L. Teaz. Well, but Sir Peter, you know you promised to come.

Sir Pet. Well, I shall just call in to look after my own character.

L. Teaz. Then, upon my word, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. [Exit Lady Teazle.

Sir Pet. I have got much by my intended expostulation—What a charming air she has!—what a neck, and how pleasingly she shews her contempt of my authority!—Well, though I can't make her love me, 'tis some pleasure to teize her a little, and I think she never appears to such

advantage, as when she is doing every thing to vex and plague me.

SCENE, Lady SNEERWELL's House.

Enter Lady SNEERWELL, CRABTREE, Sir BENJAMIN, JOSEPH, Mrs CANDOUR, and MARIA.

L. Sneer. Nay, positively we'll have it.

Jos. Aye, aye, the epigram by all means.

Sir Benj. Oh! plague on it, it's mere nonsense.

Crab. Faith, ladies, 'twas excellent for an extempore.

Sir Benj. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances — You must know that one day last week, as Lady Bab Curricie was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which I took out my pocket book, and in a moment produced the following: —

“ Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies,

“ Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies;

“ To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,

“ Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.”

Crab. There, ladies,—done in the crack of a whip—
and on horseback too!

Jos. Oh! a very Phœbus mounted —

Mrs Cand. I must have a copy.

Enter Lady TEAZLE.

L. Sneer. Lady Teazle, how do you do,—I hope we shall see Sir Peter.

L. Teaz. I believe he will wait on your ladyship presently.

L. Sneer. Maria, my love, you look grave; come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr Surface.

Mar. I take very little pleasure in cards—but I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

L. Teaz. I wonder he would sit down to cards with Maria.—I thought he would have taken an opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came. *[Aside.]*

Mrs Cand. Well, now I'll forswear his society. *[Aside.]*

L. Teaz. What's the matter, Mrs Candour?

Mrs Cand. Why, they are so censorious they won't allow our friend, Miss Vermillion, to be handsome.

L. Sneer. Oh, surely she's a pretty woman.

Crab. I'm glad you think so.

Mrs Cand. She has a charming fresh colour.

L. Teaz. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs Cand. Well, I'll swear 'tis natural, for I've seen it come and go.

L. Teaz. Yes, it comes at night, and goes again in the morning.

Sir Benj. True, madam, it not only goes and comes, but what's more, egad her maid can fetch and carry it.

Mrs Cand. Well, — and what do you think of her sister?

Crab. What, Mrs Evergreen—'foregad, she's six and fifty if she's a day.

Mrs Cand. Nay, I'll swear two or three and sixty is the outside—I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benj. Oh, there's no judging by her looks, unless we could see her face.

L. Sneer. Well, if Mrs Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, she certainly effects it with great ingenuity, and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Oaker chinks her wrinkles.

Sir Benj. Nay, now my Lady Sneerwell, you are too severe upon the widow—Come, it is not that she paints so ill, but when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once, that the head is modern, though the trunk's antique.

Crab. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Benj. Why she has pretty teeth.

L. Teaz. Yes, and upon that account never shuts her mouth, but keeps it always a-jar, as it were, thus (*shows her teeth.*)

Omnès. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Teaz. And yet, I vow that's better than the pains Mrs Prim takes to conceal her losses in front; —she draws her mouth till it resembles the aperture of a poor-box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-ways, as it were, thus—

"How do you do, madam?—Yes, madam."

L. Sneer. Ha, ha, ha; very well, Lady Teazle—I vow you appear to be a little severe.

L. Teaz. In defence of a friend, you know, it is but

just.—But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter Sir PETER.

Sir Pet. Ladies, your servant—mercy upon me!—
The whole set—a character dead at every sentence.

[Aside.]

Mrs Cand. They won't allow good qualities to any one—not even good nature to our friend Mrs Pursey.

Crab. What! the old fat dowager that was at Mrs Quadrille's last night.

Mrs Cand. Her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

L. Sneer. That's very true, indeed

L. Teaz. Yes.—I'm told she absolutely lives upon acids and small whey, laces herself with pullies;—often, in the hottest day in Summer, you shall see her on a little squat poney, with her hair platted and turned up like a drummer, and away she goes puffing round the ring in a full trot.

Sir Pet. Mercy on me! this is her own relation; a person they dine with twice a week.

[Aside.]

Mrs Cand. I vow you shan't be so severe upon the dowager; for let me tell you, great allowances are to be made for a woman who strives to pass for a flirt at six and thirty.

L. Sneer. Though surely she's handsome still; and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle light, 'tis not to be wondered at.

Mrs Cand. Very true; and for her manner, I think it very graceful, considering she never had any education; for her mother, you know, was a Welch milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Benj. Aye, you are both of ye too good natured.

Mrs Cand. Well, I never will join in the ridicule of a friend; so I tell my cousin Ogle, and ye all know what pretensions she has to beauty.

Crab. She has the oddest countenance—a collection of features from all corners of the globe.

Sir Benj. She has, indeed, an Irish front.

Crab. Caledonian locks.

Sir Benj. Dutch nose.

Crab. Austrian lips.

Sir Benj. The complexion of a Spaniard.

Crab. And teeth a la Chinoise.

Sir *Benj.* In short, her face resembles a table droit at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation.

Crab. Or a Congress at the close of a general war, where every member seems to have a different interest, and the nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Sir *Benj.* Ha, ha, ha.

L. *Sneer.* Ha, ha.—Well, I vow you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs *Cand.* Well, I vow you shan't carry the laugh so,—let me tell you, that Mrs Oagle—

Sir *Pet.* Madam, madam, 'tis impossible to stop those good gentlemen's tongues; but when I tell you, Mrs Candour, that the lady they are speaking of is a particular friend of mine, I hope you will be so good as not to undertake her defence.

L. *Sneer.* Well said, Sir Peter; but you are a cruel creature, too phlegmatic yourself for a wit, and too peevish to allow it to others.

Sir *Pet.* True wit, madam, is more nearly allied to good nature than you are aware of.

L. *Teaz.* True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near a kin that they can never be united.

Sir *Benj.* Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, one so seldom sees them together.

L. *Teaz.* But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir *Pet.* Foregad, madam, if they considered the sporting with reputations of as much consequence as poaching on manors, and passed an act for the preservation of fame, they would find many would thank them for the bill.

L. *Sneer.* O lud!—Sir Peter would deprive us of our privileges.

Sir *Pet.* Yes, madam; and none should then have the liberty to kill characters, and run down reputations, but privileged old maids, and disappointed widows.

L. *Sneer.* Go, you monster!

Mrs *Cand.* But surely you would not be so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir *Pet.* Yes, madam, I would have law for them too; and wherever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, I verily believe there never was a scandalous story without some foundation.

Sir Pet. Nine out of ten are formed on some malicious invention, or idle representation.

L. Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter a SERVANT, who whispers Sir PETER.

Sir Pet. I'll come directly——I'll steal away unperceived,
[*Aside.*

L. Sneer. Sir Peter, you're not leaving us.

Sir Pet. I beg pardon, ladies, 'tis particular business, and I must—But I leave my character behind me. [Exit.

Sir Benj. Well, certainly Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily, if he was not your husband.

L. Teaz. Oh, never mind that—This way.

[*They walk up and exeunt.*

Jos. You take no pleasure in this society.

Mar. How can I? If to raise a malicious smile at the misfortunes and infirmities of those who are unhappy, be a proof of wit and humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness.

Jos. And yet they have no malice in their hearts.

Mar. Then it is the more inexcusable, since nothing but an ungovernable depravity of heart could tempt them to such a practice.

Jos. And is it possible, Maria, that you can thus feel for others, and yet be cruel to me alone?—Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Mar. Why will you persist to persecute me on a subject on which you have long since known my sentiments.

Jos. Oh, Maria, you should not be thus deaf to me, but that Charles, that libertine, is still a favoured rival.

Mar. Ungenerously urged! but whatever my sentiments are, with regard to that unfortunate young man, be assured, I shall not consider myself more bound to give him up, because his misfortunes have lost him the regards—
even of a brother—[*Going out.*

Jos. Nay, Maria, you shall not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest I swear—[*Kneels, and sees Lady Teazle entering behind.*] Ah! Lady Teazle, ah! you shall not stir—[*To Maria*]—I have the greatest regard in

the world for Lady Teazle, but if Sir Peter was once to suspect——

Mar. Lady Teazle!——

L. Teaz. What is all this, child? You are wanting in the next room.—[*Exit Maria*]—What is the meaning of all this?——What! did you take her for me?

Jos. Why, you must know—*Maria*—by some means suspecting—the—great regard I entertain for your ladyship—was—was—threatening—if I did not desist, to acquaint Sir Peter—and I—I—was just reasoning with her——

L. Teaz. You seem to have adopted a very tender method of reasoning—pray, do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Why, you know she's but a child, and I thought a little bombast might be useful to keep her silent.—But, my dear Lady Teazle, when will you come and give me your opinion of my library.

L. Teaz. Why, I really begin to think it not so proper; and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion dictates.

Jos. Oh, no more;—a mere Platonic Cicisbeo, that every lady is entitled to.

L. Teaz. No further—and though Sir Peter's treatment may make me uneasy, it shall never provoke me——

Jos. To the only revenge in your power.

L. Teaz. Go, you insinuating wretch—but we shall be missed, let us join the company.

Jos. I'll follow your ladyship.

L. Teaz. Don't stay long, for I promise you *Maria* shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning. [*Exit*

Jos. A pretty situation I am in—by gaining the wife I shall lose the heiress.—I at first intended to make her ladyship only the instrument in my designs on *Maria*, but,—I don't know how it is—I am become her serious admirer. I begin now to wish I had not made a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has brought me into so many confounded rogueries, that I fear I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit*.

SCENE, Sir PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter Sir OLIVER and ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. Ha, ha, and so my old friend is married at last, oh Rowley,—and to a young wife out of the country,

ha, ha, ha. That he should buff to old batchelors so long, and sink into a husband at last.

Rowl. But let me beg of you, sir, not to rally him upon the subject, for he cannot bear it, though he has been married these seven months.

Sir Oliv. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance. Poor Sir Peter!—But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, eh?

Rowl. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I believe is greatly aggravated by a suspicion of a connection between Charles and Lady Teazle; and such a report I know has been circulated and kept up, by means of Lady Sneerwell, and a scandalous party who associate at her house; where, I am convinced, if there is any partiality in the case, Joseph is the favourite.

Sir Oliv. Aye, aye—I know there are a set of mischievous prating gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has sense enough to know the value of it:—But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by any such, I promise you—No, no, if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowl. I rejoice, sir, to hear you say so; and am happy to find the son of my old master has one friend left, however.

Sir Oliv. What! shall I forget, master Rowley, when I was at his years myself;—egad, neither my brother nor I were very prudent youths, and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Rowl. 'Tis that reflection I build my hopes on—and, my life on't! Charles will prove deserving of your kindness.—But here comes Sir Peter.

Enter Sir PETER.

Sir Pet. Where is he? Where is Sir Oliver?—Ah, my dear friend, I rejoice to see you!—You are welcome—indeed you are welcome—you are welcome to England a thousand—and a thousand times! ———

Sir Oliv. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter—and I am glad to find you so well, believe me.

Sir Pet. Ah, Sir Oliver!—It's sixteen years since last we saw each other—many a bout we have had together in our time!

Sir Oliv. Aye! I have had my share.—But what,

I find you are married—hey old boy!—Well, well, it can't be helped, and so I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir Pet. Thank you, thank you—Yes, Sir Oliver, I have entered into that happy state—but we won't talk of that now.

Sir Oliv. That's true, Sir Peter, old friends should not begin upon grievances at their first meeting, no, no, no.

Rowl. [*Afide to Sir Oliver*] Have, a care, sir;—don't touch upon that subject.

Sir Oliv. Well,———so one of my nephews, I find, is a wilk young rogue.

Sir Pet. Oh, my dear friend, I grieve at your disappointment there.—Charles is, indeed, a sad libertine—but no matter, Joseph will make you ample amends—every body speaks well of him.

Sir Oliv. I am very sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow.—Every body speaks well of him—pshaw—then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools, as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Pet. What the plague! are you angry with Joseph for not making enemies?

Sir Oliv. Why not, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Pet. Well, well, see him, and you'll be convinced how worthy he is.—He's a pattern for all the young men of the age—He's a man of the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliv. Oh! plague of his sentiments—If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly.—But don't however mistake me, Sir Peter, I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts, and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for that purpose.

Sir Pet. My life on Joseph's honour.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink your lady's health, and tell you all our schemes.

Sir Pet. Alons—done.

Sir Oliv. And don't, Sir Peter, be too severe against your old friend's son—Odds my life, I am not sorry he has run a little out of the course—for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis

like ivy round the saplin, and spoils the growth of the tree. [Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE, Sir PETER's House.

Enter Sir PETER, Sir OLIVER, and ROWLEY.

Sir PETER.

WELL, well, we'll see this man first, and then have our wine afterwards.—But Rowley, I don't see the jest of your scheme.

Rowl. Why, sir, this Mr Stanley was a near relation of their mother's, and formerly an eminent merchant in Dublin—he failed in trade, and is greatly reduced; he has applied by letter to Mr Surface and Charles for assistance—from the former of whom he has received nothing but fair promises; while Charles, in the midst of his own distresses, is at present endeavouring to raise a sum of money, part of which I know he intends for the use of Mr Stanley.

Sir Oliv. Aye—he's my brother's son.

Rowl. Now, sir, we propose, that Sir Oliver shall visit them both, in the character of Mr Stanley; as I have informed them he has obtained leave of his creditors to wait on his friends in person—and in the younger, believe me, you'll find one, who, in the midst of dissipation and extravagance, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, *A tear of pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity.*

Sir Pet. What signifies his open hand and purse, if he has nothing to give. But where is this person you were speaking of?

Rowl. Below, sir, waiting your commands—You must know, Sir Oliver, this is a friendly Jew; one who, to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to assist Charles—Who waits—[*Enter a servant*] desire Mr Moses to walk up. [Exit servant.]

Sir Pet. But how are you sure he'll speak truth?

Rowl. Why, sir, I have persuaded him, there's no prospect of his being paid several sums of money he has advanced for Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is in town; therefore you may depend on

his being faithful to his interest---Oh! here comes the honest Israelite.

Enter MOSES.

Sir Oliver, this is Mr Moses.-----Mr Moses, this is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Mos. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him-----but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliv. That was unlucky truly, for your had no opportunity of shewing your talent.

Mos. None at all; I had not the pleasure of knowing his distresses, 'till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliv. Unfortunate indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him.

Mos. Yes, he knows that-----This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will advance him some monies.

Sir Pet. What! a person that Charles has never borrowed money of before, lend him any in his present circumstances.

Mos. Yes-----

Sir Oliv. What is the gentleman's name?

Mos. Mr Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. Does he know Mr Premium?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir Pet. A thought strikes me-----Suppose, Sir Oliver, you was to visit him in that character; 'twill be much better than the romantic one of an old relation; you will then have an opportunity of seeing Charles in all his glory.

Sir Oliv. Egad I like that idea better than the other, and then I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Rowl. Gentlemen, this is taking Charles rather unawares; but, Moses, you understand Sir Oliver, and I dare say will be faithful.

Mos. You may depend upon me.-----This is very near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliv. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses-----But hold-----I had forgot one thing-----how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Mos. There is no need-----the principal is a Christian.

Sir Oliv. Is he? I am very sorry for it—But then again, am I not too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

Sir Pet. Not at all—it would not be out of character if you went in your own chariot; would it, Moses?

Mos. Not in the least.

Sir Oliv. Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury, or mode of treating, that I ought to know.

Sir Pet. As I take it, Sir Oliver, the great point is to be exorbitant in your demands.—Eh, Moses?

Mos. Yes, dat is very great point.

Sir Oliv. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that, eight or ten *per cent.* on the loan at least.

Mos. Oh! if you ask him no more as dat you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliv. Hey, what the plague—how much then?

Mos. That depends upon the circumstances—if he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty *per cent.* but if you find him in great distress, and he wants money very bad—you must ask double.

Sir Pet. Upon my word, Sir Oliver—Mr Premium I mean—it's a very pretty trade you're learning.

Sir Oliv. Truly I think so; and not unprofitable.

Mos. Then you know you have not the money yourself, but are forced to borrow it of a friend.

Sir Oliv. Oh! I borrow it for him of a friend—do I?

Mos. Yes, and your friend's an unconscionable dog—but you can't help dat.

Sir Oliv. Oh! my friend's an unconscionable dog—he?

Mos. And then he himself has not the monies by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliv. He's forced to sell stock at a great loss,—well, really, that's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. But hark'ye, Moses, if Sir Oliver was to rail a little at the annuity bill, don't you think it would have a good effect.

Mos. Very much.

Rowl. And lament that a young man must now come to years of discretion, before he has it in his power to ruin himself.

Mos. Aye! a great pity.

Sir Pet. Yes, and abuse the public for allowing merit to a bill, whose only object was to preserve youth and inexperience from the rapacious gripe of usury, and to give the young heir an opportunity of enjoying his fortune, without being ruined by coming into possession.

Sir Oliv. So,—so,—Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You'll scarce have time to learn your trade, for Charles lives but hard by.

Sir Oliv. Oh! never fear—my tutor appears so able, that tho' Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I have turned the corner.

[*Exit Sir Oliver and Moses.*]

Sir Pet. So Rowley, you would have been partial, and given Charles notice of our plot.

Rowl. No indeed, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, I see Maria coming, I want to have some talk with her.

[*Exit Rowley.*]

Enter MARIA.

So Maria, What, is Mr Surface come home with you?

Mar. No, sir, he was engaged.

Sir Pet. Maria, I wish you were more sensible to his excellent qualities,—does not every time you are in his company convince you of the merit of that amiable young man?

Mar. You know, Sir Peter, I have often told you, that of all the men who have paid me a particular attention, there is not one I would not sooner prefer, than Mr Surface.

Sir Pet. Aye, aye, this blindness to his merit proceeds from your attachment to that profligate brother of his.

Mar. This is unkind; you know, at your request, I have forbore to see or correspond with him, as I have long been convinced he is unworthy my regard; but while my reason condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his misfortunes.

Sir Pet. Ah! you had best resolve to think of him no more, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Mar. Never to his brother.

Sir Pet. Have a care, Maria, I have not yet made you know what the authority of a guardian is, don't force me to exert it.

Mar. I know, that for a short time I am to obey you as my father,—but must cease to think you so, when you

would compel me to be miserable.

[Exit in tears.]

Sir Pet. Sure never man was plagued as I am; I had not been married above three weeks, before her father, a hearty man, died—on purpose, I believe, to plague me with the care of his daughter: but here comes my help mate, she seems in mighty good humour; I wish I could teize her into loving me a little.

Enter Lady TEAZLE.

L. Teaz. What's the matter, Sir Peter? What have you done to Maria? It is not fair to quarrel and I not by.

Sir Pet. Ah! Lady Teazle, it is in your power to put me into good humour at any time.

L. Teaz. Is it? I am glad of it—for I want you to be in a monstrous good humour now; come, do be good humoured, and let me have two hundred pounds.

Sir Pet. What the plague! can't I be in a good humour without paying for it—but look always thus, and you shall want for nothing. (*Pulls out a pocket book*) There, there's two hundred pounds for you, (*going to kiss*) now seal me a bond for the repayment.

L. Teaz. No, my note of hand will do as well.

[Giving her hand.]

Sir Pet. Well, well, I must be satisfied with that—you shan't much longer reproach me for not having made you a proper settlement—I intend shortly to surprize you.

L. Teaz. Do you? You can't think, Sir Peter, how good humour becomes you; now you look just as you did before I married you.

Sir Pet. Do I indeed?

L. Teaz. Don't you remember when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and asked me if I could like an old fellow, who could deny me nothing.

Sir Pet. Aye, and you were so attentive and obliging to me then.

L. Teaz. Aye to be sure I was, and used to take your part against all my acquaintance; and when my cousin Sophy used to laugh at me, for thinking of marrying a man old enough to be my father, and call you an ugly, stiff, formal old batchelor, I contradicted her, and said I did not think you so ugly by any means, and that I dar'd say, you would make a good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. That was very kind of you—Well, and you were not mistaken, you have found it so, have you not? —But shall we always live thus happy?

L. Teaz. With all my heart;—I'm—I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling—provided you will own you are tired first.

Sir Pet. With all my heart.

L. Teaz. Then we shall be as happy as the day is long, and never, never—never quarrel more.

Sir Pet. Never—never—never—and let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

L. Teaz. Aye!—

Sir Pet. But, my dear Lady Teazle—my love—indeed you must keep a strict watch over your temper—for, you know, my dear, that in all our disputes and quarrels, you always begin first.

L. Teaz. No, no, Sir Peter, my dear, 'tis always you that begins.

Sir Pet. No, no—no such thing.

L. Teaz. Have a care, this is not the way to live happy, if you fly out thus.

Sir Pet. No, no—'tis you.

L. Teaz. No—'tis you.

Sir Pet. Zounds!—I say 'tis you,

L. Teaz. Lord! I never saw such a man in my life—just what my cousin Sophy told me.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, saucy, impertinent minx.

L. Teaz. You are a very great bear, I am sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. But I am well enough served for marrying you—a pert, forward, rural coquette, who had refused half the honest 'squires in the country.

L. Teaz. I am sure I was a great fool for marrying you—a stiff, crop, dangling old batchelor, who was unmarried at fifty, because no body would have him.

Sir Pet. You was very glad to have me—you never had such an offer before.

L. Teaz. Oh, yes I had—there was Sir Tivey Terrier, who every body said would be a better match; for his estate was full as good as yours, and—he has broke his neck since we were married.

Sir Pet. Very---very well, madam---you're an ungrateful woman; and may plagues light on me, If I ever try

to be friends with you again.—You shall have a separate maintenance.

L. Teaz. By all means a separate maintenance.

Sir Pet. Very well, madam — Oh, very well. Aye, madam, and I believe the stories of you and Charles—
—of you and Charles, madam,—were not without foundation.

L. Teaz. Take care, Sir Peter; take care what you say, for I won't be suspected without a cause, I promise you.

Sir Pet. A divorce!—

L. Teaz. Aye, a divorce.

Sir Pet. Aye, zounds! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old batchelors.

L. Teaz. Well, Sir Peter, I see you are going to be in a passion, so I'll leave you, and when you come properly to your temper, we shall be the happiest couple in the world; and never—never—quarrel more. Ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. What the devil! can't I make her angry neither.—I'll after her—Zounds—she must not presume to keep her temper.—No, no,—she may break my heart—but damn it—I'm determined she shan't keep her temper.

(*Exit*)

SCENE, CHARLES'S HOUSE.

Enter TRIP, Sir OLIVER, and MOSES.

Trip. This way, gentlemen, this way.—Moses, what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliv. Mr Moses, what's my name?

(*Aside*)

Mos. Mr Premium—

Trip. Oh, Mr Premium,—very well.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Oliv. To judge by the servant, one would not imagine the master was ruined—Sure this was my brother's house.

Mos. Yes, sir,—Mr Charles bought it of Mr Joseph, with furniture, pictures, &c. just as the old gentleman left it.—Sir Peter thought it a great piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliv. In my mind, the other's œconomy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, my master is very sorry he has company at present, and cannot see you.

Sir Oliv. If he knew who it was that wanted to see him, perhaps he would not have sent such a message.

Trip. Oh! yes, I told him who it was—I did not forget my little Premium, no, no.

Sir Oliv. Very well, sir; and pray what may your name be?

Trip. Trip, sir; Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliv. Very well, Mr Trip—You have a pleasant sort of a place here, I guess.

Trip. Pretty well—There are four of us, who pass our time agreeably enough—Our wages, indeed, are but small, and sometimes a little in arrear—We have but fifty guineas a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliv. Bags and bouquets!—Halters and bastina—does!

Trip. Oh, Moses, hark'ye—did you get that little bill discounted for me?

Sir Oliv. Wants to raise money too!—Mercy on me!—He has distresses, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

[Aside.]

Mos. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr Trip.

[Gives the note.]

Trip. No! Why I thought when my friend Brush had set his mark on it, it was as good as cash.

Mos. No, indeed, it would not do.

Trip. Perhaps you could get it done by way of annuity.

Sir Oliv. An annuity!—A footman raise money by annuity!—Well said luxury, egad.

[Aside.]

Mos. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, I'll insure my life, if you please.

Sir Oliv. That's more than I would your neck. *[Aside.]*

Trip. Well, but I should like to have it done before this damn'd registry takes place; one would not wish to have one's name made public.

Mos. No, certainly—But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, there's none of my master's cloaths will fall very soon, I believe; but I can give a mortgage on some of his winter suits, with equity of redemption before Christmas—or a *peff obit* on his blue and silver. Now these,

with a few pairs of point ruffles, by way of security, (*bell rings*) coming, coming. Gentlemen, if you'll walk this way, perhaps I may introduce you now.—Moses, don't forget the annuity—I'll insure my place, my little fellow.

Sir *Oliv.* If the man is the shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed. [*Exeunt.*]

CHARLES, CARELESS, Sir TOBY, and Gentlemen, discovered drinking.

Char. Ha, ha, ha——'Fore heaven you are in the right—the degeneracy of the age is astonishing; there are many of our acquaintance who are men of wit, genius, and spirit, but then they won't drink.

Care. True, Charles; they sink into the more substantial luxuries of the table, and quite neglect the bottle.

Char. Right—besides, society suffers by it; for instead of the mirth and humour that used to mantle over a bottle of Burgundy, their conversation is become as insipid as the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness of Champagne, without its spirit or flavour.

Sir *Toby.* But what will you say to those who prefer play to the bottle?—There's Harry, Dick, and Careless himself, who are under a hazard regimen.

Char. Psha! no such thing—What, would you train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn?—Let me throw upon a bottle of Burgundy, and I never lose; at least I never feel my loss, and that's the same thing.

1st *Gent.* True; besides, 'tis wine that determines if a man be really in love.

Char. So it is—Fill up a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at the top, is the girl that has bewitched you.

Care. But come, Charles, you have not given us your real favourite.

Char. Faith I have with-held her only in compassion to you; for if I give her, you must toast a round of her peers, which is impossible, (*sighs*) on earth.

Care. We'll toast some heathen deity, or celestial goddess to match her.

Char. Why then bumpers—bumpers all round—Here's Maria—Maria.—(*Sighs*)

1st *Gent.* Maria——'psha, give us her surname.

Char. 'Pshaw—Hang her fir-name, that's too formal to be registered on love's kalendar.

1st Gent. Maria then.—Here's Maria.

Sir Toby. Maria—Come, here's Maria.

Char. Come, Sir Toby, have a care; you must give a beauty superlative.

Sir Toby. Then I'll give you—Here's—

Care. Nay, never hesitate.—But Sir Toby has got a song that will excuse him.

Omnes. The song—the song.

S O N G.

Here's to the maiden of blushing fifteen,

Now to the widow of fifty;

Here's to the flaunting extravagant queen,

And then to the housewife that's thrifty.

Let the toast pass, drink to the last,

I warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize,

Now to the damsel with none, fir;

Here's to the maid with her pair of blue eyes,

And now to the nymph with but one, fir.

Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with her bosom of snow,

Now to her that's as brown as a berry;

Here's to the wife with her face full of woe,

And now to the damsel that's merry.

Let the toast pass, &c.

For let them be clumsy, or let them be slim,

Young or ancient I care not a feather;

So fill us a bumper quite up to the brim,

And e'en let us toast them together.

Let the toast pass, &c.

TRIP enters and whispers CHARLES.

Char. Gentlemen, I must beg your pardon; [*rising*] I must leave you upon business—Careless, take the chair.

Care. What, this is some wench—but we won't lose you for her.

Char. No, upon my honour—It is only a Jew and a broker that are come by appointment.

Care. A Jew and a broker! we'll have 'em in.

Char. Then desire Mr Moses to walk in.

Trip. And little Premium too, sir.

Care. Aye, Moses and Premium. [*Exit Trip*] Charles, we'll give the rascals some generous Burgundy.

Char. No, hang it—wine but draws forth the natural qualities of a man's heart, and to make them drink, would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter Sir OLIVER and MOSES.

Walk in, gentlemen, walk in; Trip, give chairs; sit down Mr Premium, sit down Moses. Glasses, Trip; come, Moses, I'll give you a sentiment, "*Here's success to usury.*" Moses, fill the gentlemen a bumper.

Mos. "Here's success to usury."

Care. True, Charles, usury is industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliv. Then here's "All the success it deserves."

Care. Oh, dam'me, sir, that won't do; you demur to the toast, and shall drink it in a pint bumper at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, sir, consider Mr Premium is a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine, and I'll see justice done to the bottle.—Fill Moses a quart.

Char. Pray, consider gentlemen, Mr Premium is a stranger.

Sir Oliv. I wish I was out of their company. [*Aside.*

Care. Come along, my boys, if they won't drink with us we'll not stay with them; the dice are in the next room—You'll settle your business, Charles, and come to us.

Char. Aye, aye.—But, Careless, you must be ready, perhaps I may have occasion for you.

Care. Aye, aye, bill, bond, or annuity, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit with the rest.*

Mos. Mr Premium is a gentleman of the strictest honour and secrecy, and always performs what he undertakes.—Mr Premium, this is—(*formally*)

Char. 'Pshaw! hold your tongue—My friend, Moses, sir, is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression—I shall cut the matter very short;—I am an extravagant young fellow that wants to borrow money; and you, as I take it, are a prudent old fellow who has got money to lend—I am such a fool as to give fifty per cent. rather than go without it; and you, I suppose, are rogue enough

to take an hundred if you can get it. And now we understand one another, and may proceed to business without further ceremony.

Sir Oliv. Exceeding frank, upon my word—I see you are not a man of compliments.

Char. No, sir.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I like you the better for it—However you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure you some from a friend; but then he's a damn'd unconscionable dog; is he not, Moses?

Mos. Yes, but you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. And then, he has not the money by him, but must sell stock at a great loss. Must he not, Moses?

Mos. Yes, indeed—You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie.

Char. Aye, those who speak truth usually do—And, sir, I must pay the difference, I suppose—Why, look'ye, Mr Premium, I know that money is not to be had without paying for it.

Sir Oliv. Well—but what security could you give?—You have not any land I suppose?

Char. Not a mole hill, nor a twig but what grows in bow-pots out at the windows.

Sir Oliv. Nor any stock, I presume.

Char. None but live stock, and they are only a few pointers and ponies.—But pray, sir, are you acquainted with any of my connections?

Sir Oliv. To say the truth, I am.

Char. Then you must have heard that I have a rich old uncle in India, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliv. That you have a wealthy uncle I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out, is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Char. Oh yes, I'm told I am a monstrous favourite; and that he intends leaving me every thing.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! this is the first I have heard of it.

Char. Yes, yes, he intends making me his heir—Does he not, Moses?

Mos. Oh yes, I'll take my oath of that.

Sir Oliv. Egad they'll persuade me presently that I'm at Bengal. (*Aside*)

Char. Now, what I propose, Mr Premium, is to give

you a *post obit* on my uncle's life. Though, indeed, my uncle Nol has been very kind to me, and upon my soul, I shall be sincerely sorry to hear any thing has happened to him.

Sir *Oliv.* Not more than I should I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be the worst security you could offer me, for I might live to be an hundred, and never recover the principal.

Char. Oh, yes you could, for the moment he dies, you come upon me for the money.

Sir *Oliv.* Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Char. What, you are afraid, my little Premium, that my uncle is too good a life.

Sir *Oliv.* No, indeed, I am not; though I have heard he's as heal, and as hearty, as any man of his years in Christendom.

Char. Oh, there you are misinformed. No, no, poor uncle Oliver! he breaks apace. The climate, sir, has hurt his constitution, and I'm told he's so much altered of late, that his nearest relations don't know him.

Sir *Oliv.* No! ha, ha, ha; so much altered of late, that his nearest relations would not know him. Ha, ha, ha, that's droll, egad.

Char. What, you are pleased to hear he is on the decline, my little Premium.

Sir *Oliv.* No, I am not,——no, no, no.

Char. Yes you are, for it mends your chance.

Sir *Oliv.* But I am told Sir Oliver is coming over——Nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Char. Oh, there you are misinformed again——No——no such thing——he is this moment at Bengal. What! I must certainly know better than you.

Sir *Oliv.* Very true, as you say, you must know better than I; though I have it from very good authority——Have I not, Moses?

Mos. Most undoubtedly.

Sir *Oliv.* But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing that you would dispose of?

Char. How do you mean?

Sir *Oliv.* For instance, now; I have heard your father left behind him a great quantity of mally old plate.

Char. Yes, but that is gone long ago—Moses can inform you how, better than I can.

Sir Oliv. Good lack! all the family race cups, and corporation bowls gone! (*Aside.*) It was also supposed, that his library was one of the most valuable and compleat.

Char. Much too large and valuable for a private gentleman: for my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, and thought it a pity to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliv. Mercy on me! knowledge that has run in the family like an heir-loom. (*Aside.*) And pray, how may they have been disposed of?

Char. O! You must ask the auctioneer that—I don't believe even Moses can direct you there.

Mos. No—I never meddle with books.

Sir Oliv. The profligate? (*Aside.*) And is there nothing you can dispose of?

Char. Nothing—unless you have a taste for old family pictures. I have a whole room full of ancestors above stairs.

Sir Oliv. Why sure you would not sell your relations?

Char. Every soul of them to the best bidder.

Sir Oliv. Not your great uncles and aunts.

Char. Aye, and my grandfathers and grandmothers.

Sir Oliv. I'll never forgive him this. (*Aside.*) Why! —what!—Do you take me for Shylock in the play, to raise money from me on your own flesh and blood!

Char. Nay, don't be in a passion, my little Premium; what is it to you, if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliv. That's very true, as you say—Well, well, I believe I can dispose of the family canvas. I'll never forgive him this. (*Aside.*)

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Come, Charles, what the devil are you doing so long with the broker—we are waiting for you.

Char. Oh! Careless, you are just come in time, we are to have a sale above stairs—I am going to sell all my ancestors to little Premium.

Care. Burn your ancestors!

Char. No, no, he may do that afterwards, if he will. But Careless, you shall be auctioneer.

Care. With all my heart—I handle a hammer as well as a dice box—a going—a going.

Char. Bravo!—And Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one.

Mos. Yes, I'll be the appraiser.

Sir Oliv. Oh, the profligate!

(Aside.)

Char. But what's the matter, my little Premium? You don't seem to relish this business.

Sir Oliv. [*Affecting to laugh.*] Oh yes, I do, vastly; ha, ha, ha, I—Oh the profligate!

(Aside.)

Char. Very true; for when a man wants money, who the devil can he make free with if he can't with his own relations.

[Exit.]

Sir Oliv. [*Following.*] I'll never forgive him.

ACT IV.

Enter CHARLES, Sir OLIVER, CARELESS, and MOSES.

CHARLES.

WALK in, gentlemen, walk in; here they are—the family of the Surfaces up to the conquest.

Sir Oliv. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Char. Aye, there they are, done in the true spirit and style of portrait painting, and not like your modern Raphaels, who will make your picture independent of yourself:—no, the great merit of these are, the inveterate likeness they bear to the originals. All stiff and awkward as they were, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliv. Oh, we shall never see such figures of men again.

Char. I hope not—You see, Mr Premium, what a domestic man I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my ancestors——But come, let us proceed to business——To your pulpit, Mr Auctioneer — Oh, here's a great chair of my father's that seems fit for nothing else.

Care. The very thing—but what shall I do for a hammer, Charles? An auctioneer is nothing without a hammer.

Char. A hammer! [*looking round.*] Let's see, what have we here—Sir Richard, heir to Robert—a genealogy in full, egad——Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany; here's the family tree, and

now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. What an unnatural rogue he is!—An expert facto parricide. [*Aside.*]

Care. 'Gad, Charles, this is lucky; it will not only serve for a hammer, but a catalogue too if we should want it.

Char. True—Come, here's my great uncle Sir Richard Ravelin, a marvellous good general in his day.—He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet—He is not dressed out in feathers like our modern captains, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be.—What say you, Mr Premium?

Mos. Mr Premium would have you speak.

Char. Why, you shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's cheap enough for a staff officer.

Sir Oliv. Heaven deliver me! his great uncle Sir Richard going for ten pounds—[*Aside.*]
—Well, sir, I take him at that price.

Char. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.

Care. Going, going—
a going—gone.

Char. This is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, thought to be one of his best pictures, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she sits, as a shepherdess feeding her flock.—You shall have her for five pounds ten. I'm sure the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliv. Ah, poor aunt Deborah! a woman that set such a value on herself, going for five pounds ten—
[*Aside.*]
—Well, sir, she's mine.

Char. Knock down my aunt Deborah, Careless.

Care. Gone.

Char. Here are two cousins of theirs—Moses, these pictures were done when beaux wore periwigs, and ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliv. Yes, truly—head dresses seem to have been somewhat lower in those days.

Char. Here's a grandfather of my mother's, a judge well known on the western circuit. What will you give for him.

Mos. Four guineas.

Char. Four guineas! why you don't bid the price of

his wig. Premium, you have more respect for the woolpack; do let me knock him down at fifteen.

Sir Oliv. By all means.

Care. Gone.

Char. Here are two brothers, William and Walter Blunt, Esqrs. both members of parliament, and great speakers; and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliv. That's very extraordinary indeed!—I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of parliament.

Char. Well said, Premium.

Care. I'll knock 'em down at forty pounds——Going——going——gone.

Char. Here's a jolly, portly fellow; I don't know what relation he is to the family; but he was formerly mayor of Norwich, let's knock him down at eight pounds.

Sir Oliv. No. I think six is enough for a mayor.

Char. Come, come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen into the bargain.

Sir Oliv. They are mine.

Char. Careleis, knock down the mayor and aldermen.

Care. Gone.

Char. But hang it, we shall be all day at this rate; come, come, give me three hundred pounds, and take all on this side the room in a lump——That will be the best way.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, any thing to accommodate you; they are mine.——But there's one portrait you have always passed over.

Care. What, that little ill looking fellow over the settee.

Sir Oliv. Yes, sir, 'tis that I mean—but I don't think him so ill looking a fellow by any means.

Char. That's the picture of my uncle Sir Oliver —— Before he went abroad it was done, and is esteemed a very great likeness.

Care. That your uncle Oliver! Then, in my opinion, you will never be friends, for he is one of the most stern looking rogues I ever beheld; he has an unforgiving eye, and a damn'd disinheriting countenance. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliv. Upon my soul I do not, sir; I think it as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive.—

—But I suppose your uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber.

Char. No, hang it, the old gentleman has been very good to me, and I'll keep his picture as long as I have a room to put it in.

Sir Oliv. The rogue's my nephew after all—I forgive him every thing. [*Aside.*] But, fir, I have some how taken a fancy to that picture.

Char. I am sorry for it, master Broker, for you certainly won't have it.—What the devil, have you not got enough of the family.

Sir Oliv. I forgive him every thing. [*Aside.*] Look'ye, fir, I am a strange sort of a fellow, and when I take a whim in my head I don't value money: I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Char. Pr'ythee don't be troublesome—I tell you I won't part with it, and there's an end on't.

Sir Oliv. How like his father the dog is—I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw so strong a resemblance. [*Aside.*] Well, fir, here's a draft for your sum. [*Giving a bill.*]

Char. Why this bill is for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oliv. You'll not let Sir Oliver go, then.

Char. No, I tell you once for all.

Sir Oliv. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that some other time—But give me your hand; [*presses it*] you are a damn'd honest fellow, Charles—O Lord! I beg pardon, fir, for being so free——Come along, Moses.

Char. But hark'ye, Premium, you'll provide good lodgings for these gentlemen. (*Going.*)

Sir Oliv. I'll send for 'em in a day or two.

Char. And pray let it be a genteel conveyance, for I assure you most of them have been used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliv. I will for all but Oliver.

Char. For all but the honest little Nabob.

Sir Oliv. You are fixed on that.

Char. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliv. Ah the dear extravagant dog! [*Aside.*] Good day, fir. Come, Moses—Now let me see who dares call him profligate. [*Exit with Moses.*]

Care. Why, Charles, this is the very prince of brokers.

Char. I wonder where Moses got acquainted with

so honest a fellow.—But, Careless, step into the company; I'll wait on you presently, I see old Rowley coming.

Care. But hark'ye, Charles, don't let that fellow make you part with any of that money to discharge musty old debts. Tradesmen, you know, are the most impertinent people in the world.

Char. True, and paying them would only be encouraging them.

Care. Well, settle your business, and make what haste you can. [Exit.]

Char. Eight hundred pounds! Two thirds of this are mine by right—Five hundred and thirty odd pounds!—Gad, I never knew till now, that my ancestors were such valuable acquaintance.—Kind ladies and gentlemen, I am your very much obliged, and most grateful humble servant. [Bowing to the pictures.]

Enter ROWLEY.

Ah! Rowley, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintances.

Rowl. Yes, sir; I heard they were going.—But how can you support such spirits under all your misfortunes?

Char. That's the cause, master Rowley; my misfortunes are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits.

Rowl. And can you really take leave of your ancestors with so much unconcern.

Char. Unconcern! what, I suppose you are surprized that I am not more sorrowful at losing the company of so many worthy friends. It is very distressing to be sure; but you see they never move a muscle, then why the devil should I?

Rowl. Ah, dear Charles! ———

Char. But come, I have no time for trifling;—here, take this bill and get it changed, and carry an hundred pounds to poor Stanley, or we shall have somebody call that has a better right to it.

Rowl. Ah, sir, I wish you would remember the proverb——

Char. *Be just before you are generous.*——Why, so I would if I could; but justice is an old, lame, hobbling beldam, and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity for the soul of me.

Rowl. Do, dear sir, reflect.

Char. That's very true, as you say—but Rowley, while I have, by heav'ns I'll give—so damn your morality, and away to old Stanley with the money. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Sir OLIVER and MOSES.

Mos. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr Charles in all his glory—'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliv. True—but he would not sell my picture.—

Mos. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.

Mos. And games so deep.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.—Oh, here comes Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Well, sir, I find you have made a purchase.

Sir Oliv. Yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowl. And he has commissioned me to return you an hundred pounds of the purchase money, but under your fictitious character of old Stanley. I saw a taylor and two hosiery dancing attendance, who, I know, will go unpaid, and the hundred pounds would just satisfy them.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence too.—But now, I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, I'm sorry I was not in the way to shew you out. Hark'ye, Moses. [*Exit with Moses.*]

Sir Oliv. There's a fellow, now—Will you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Rowl. Indeed!

Sir Oliv. And they are now planning an annuity business—Oh, master Rowley, in my time servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were wore a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birth day cloaths, with the gloss on. [*Exit.*]

SCENE, the Apartments of JOSEPH SURFACE.

Enter JOSEPH and a SERVANT.

Jos. No letter from Lady Teazle.

Serv. No, sir.

Jos. I wonder she did not write if she could not come—I hope Sir Peter does not suspect me—But Charles's dissipation and extravagance are great points in my favour (*Knocking at the door*)—See if it is her.

Serv. 'Tis Lady Teazle, sir; but she always orders her chair to the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Then draw that screen—my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper—You need not wait (*Exit Servant.*)—My Lady Teazle, I'm afraid, begins to suspect my attachment to Maria; but she must not be acquainted with that secret till I have her more in my power.

Enter Lady TEAZLE.

L. Teaz. What, Sentiment in soliloquy!—Have you been very impatient now? Nay you look so grave,—I assure you I came as soon I could.

Jos. Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy—a very unfashionable custom among ladies.

L. Teaz. Nay, now you wrong me; I'm sure you'd pity me if you knew my situation—[*both fits.*]—Sir Peter really grows so peevish, and so ill-natured, there's no enduring him; and then, to suspect me with Charles——

Jos. I'm glad my scandalous friends keep up that report.
[*Aside.*]

L. Teaz. For my part, I wish Sir Peter to let Maria marry him—Wou'dn't you, Mr Surface?

Jos. Indeed I would not—[*Aside.*]—Oh, to be sure; and then my dear Lady Teazle would be convinced how groundless her suspicions were, of my having any thoughts of the silly girl.

L. Teaz. Then, there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has propagated malicious stories about me—and what's very provoking, all too without the least foundation.

Jos. Ah! there's the mischief—for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there's no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

L. Teaz. And to be continually censured and suspected, when I know the integrity of my own heart—it would almost prompt me to give him some grounds for it.

Jos. Certainly—for when a husband grows suspicious, and withdraws his confidence from his wife, it then becomes a part of her duty to endeavour to out-wit him.—You owe it to the natural privilege of your sex.

L. Teaz. Indeed!

Jos. Oh yes; for your husband should never be deceived in you, and you ought to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

L. Teaz. This is the newest doctrine.

Jos. Very wholesome, believe me.

L. Teaz. So, the only way to prevent his suspicions, is to give him cause for them.

Jos. Certainly.

L. Teaz. But then, the consciousness of my innocence——

Jos. Ah, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis that consciousness of your innocence that ruins you. What is it that makes you imprudent in your conduct, and careless of the censures of the world? The consciousness of your innocence.—What is it makes you regardless of forms, and inattentive to your husband's peace?—Why, the consciousness of your innocence.—Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you could only be prevailed upon to make a trifling *faus pas*, you can't imagine how circumspect you would grow.

L. Teaz. Do you think so?

Jos. Depend upon it.—Your case at present, my dear Lady Teazle, resembles that of a person in a plethora—you are absolutely dying of too much health.

L. Teaz. Why, indeed, if my understanding could be convinced——

Jos. Your understanding!—Oh yes, your understanding *should* be convinced. Heaven forbid that I should persuade you to any thing you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honour for that.

L. Teaz. Don't you think you may as well leave honour out of the question? [*both rise.*]

Jos. Ah! I see, Lady Teazle, the effects of your country education still remain.

L. Teaz. They do, indeed, and I begin to find myself imprudent; and if I should be brought to act wrong, it would be sooner from Sir Peter's ill treatment of me, than from your honourable logic, I assure you.

Jos. Then by this hand, which is unworthy of——
[*kneeling, a Servant enters.*]
—What do you want, you 1coundrel?

Serv. I beg pardon, sir——I thought you would not chuse Sir Peter should come up.

Jos. Sir Peter!

L. Teaz. Sir Peter! Oh, I'm undone!—What shall I do? Hide me somewhere, good Mr Logic.

Jos. Here, here, behind this screen, (*She runs behind the screen*) and now, reach me a book. [*Sits down and reads.*]

Enter Sir PETER.

Sir Pet. Aye, there he is, ever improving himself.—Mr Surface, Mr Surface.

Jos. [*Approaching to gaze.*] Oh, Sir Peter!—I rejoice to see you—I was got over a sleepy book here—I am vastly glad to see you—I thank you for this call—I believe you have not been here since I finished by library ——— Books, books you know, are the only thing I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. Very pretty, indeed—why, even your screen is a source of knowledge—hung round with maps I see.

Jos. Yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, so you must when you want to find any thing in a hurry.

Jos. Yes, or to hide any thing in a hurry. [*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. But, my dear friend, I want to have some private talk with you.

Jos. You need not wait.

[*Exit. Servant.*]

Sir Pet. Pray sit down—(*both sit*)—My dear friend, I want to impart to you some of my distresses—In short, Lady Teazle's behaviour of late has given me very great uneasiness. She not only dissipates and destroys my fortune, but I have strong reasons to believe she has formed an attachment elsewhere.

Jos. I am unhappy to hear it.

Sir Pet. Yes, and between you and me, I believe I have discovered the person.

Jos. You alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Pet. I knew you would sympathize with me.

Jos. Believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would affect me—just as much as it does you.

Sir Pet. What a happiness to have a friend we can trust, even with our family secrets—Can't you guess who it is?

Jos. I hav'n't the most distant idea—It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Sir Pet. No, no—What do you think of Charles?

Jos. My brother! impossible!—I can't think he would be capable of such baseness and ingratitude.

Sir Pet. Ah, the goodness of your own mind makes you slow to believe such villany.

Jos. Very true, Sir Peter.—The man who is conscious of the integrity of his own heart, is ever slow to credit another's baseness.

Sir Pet. And yet, that the son of my old friend should practice against the honour of my family.

Jos. Aye, there's the case, Sir Peter.—When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound feels doubly smart.

Sir Pet. What noble sentiments!—He never used a sentiment, ungrateful boy! that I acted as guardian to, and who was brought up under my eye; and I never in my life refused him—my advice.

Jos. I don't know, Sir Peter,—he may be such a man—if it be so, he is no longer a brother of mine; I renounce him. I disclaim him.—For the man who can break through the laws of hospitality, and seduce the wife or daughter of his friend, deserves to be branded as a pest of society.

Sir Pet. And yet, Joseph, if I was to make it public, I should only be sneered and laughed at.

Jos. Why, that's very true—No, no, you must not make it public; people would talk—

Sir Pet. Talk!—they'd say it was all my own fault; an old, doating batchelor, to marry a young giddy girl.—They'd paragraph me in the newspapers, and make ballads on me.

Jos. And yet, Sir Peter, I can't think that my Lady Teazle's honour—

Sir Pet. Ah, my dear friend, what's her honour, opposed against the flattery of a handsome young fellow.—But, Joseph, she has been upbraiding me of late, that I have not made her a settlement; and I think, in our last quarrel, she told me she should not be very sorry if I was dead. Now, I have brought drafts of two deeds for your perusal, and she shall find, if I was to die, that I have not been inattentive to her welfare while living. By the one, she will enjoy eight hundred pounds a year during my life; and by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Jos. This conduct is truly generous.—I wish it mayn't corrupt my pupil.

[*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. But I would not have her as yet acquainted with the least mark of my affection.

Jos. Nor I——if I could help it.

[*Aside.*

Sir Pet. And now I have unburthened myself to you, let us talk over your affair with Maria.

Jos. Not a syllable upon the subject now. (*alarmed*)—Some other time; I am too much affected by your affairs, to think of my own. For the man who can think of his own happiness, while his friend is in distress, deserves to be hunted as a monster to society.

Sir Pet. I am sure of your affection for her.

Jos. Let me entreat you, Sir Peter——

Sir Pet. And though you are so averse to Lady Teazle's knowing it, I assure you she is not your enemy, and I am sensibly chagrined you have made no further progress.

Jos. Sir Peter, I must not hear you——The man who——[*Enter a Servant*] What do you want sirrah?

Serv. Your brother, sir, is at the door talking to a gentleman; he says he knows you are at home, that Sir Peter is with you, and he must see you.

Jos. I'm not at home.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, you shall be at home.

Jos. [*After some hesitation.*] Very well, let him come up.

[*Exit Servant.*

Sir Pet. Now, Joseph, I'll hide myself, and do you tax him about the affair with my Lady Teazle, and so draw the secret from him.

Jos. O fye! Sir Peter——what, join in a plot to trepan my brother!

Sir Pet. Oh aye, to serve your friend;—besides, if he is innocent, as you say he is, it will give him an opportunity to clear himself, and make me very happy.—Hark, I hear him coming——Where shall I go?——Behind this screen——What the devil! here has been one listener already, for I'll swear I saw a petticoat.

Jos. [*Affecting to laugh*] It's very ridiculous—Ha, ha, ha,—a ridiculous affair, indeed—ha, ha, ha.——Hark'ye, Sir Peter, [*pulling him aside.*] though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet you know it does not follow, that one is to be an absolute Joseph neither. Hark'ye, 'tis a little French milliner, who calls upon me sometimes, and hearing you

were coming, and having some character to lose, she slipped behind the screen.

Sir Pet. A French milliner! (*Smiling*) Cunning rogue, Joseph!—Sly rogue—But zounds, she has over-heard every thing that has passed about my wife.

Jos. Oh, never fear—Take my word it will never go farther for her.

Sir Pet. Won't it?

Jos. No, depend upon it.

Sir Pet. Well, well, if it will go no farther—But—where shall I hide myself?

Jos. Here, here, slip into this closet, and you may over-hear every word.

L. Teaz. Can I steal away. (*Peeping*)

Jos. Hush! hush! don't stir.

Sir Pet. Joseph, tax him home (*Peeping*.)

Jos. In, in, my dear Sir Peter.

L. Teaz. Can't you lock the closet door.

Jos. Not a word—you'll be discovered.

Sir Pet. Joseph, don't spare him.

Jos. For heaven's sake lie close—A pretty situation I am in, to part man and wife in this manner. (*Aside*.)

Sir Pet. You're sure the little French milliner won't blab.

Enter CHARLES.

Char. Why, how now, brother, your fellows denied you, they said you were not at home.—What, have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Neither, brother, neither.

Char. But where's Sir Peter? I thought he was with you.

Jos. He was, brother; but hearing you was coming, he left the house.

Char. What, was the old fellow afraid I wanted to borrow money of him!

Jos. Borrow! no, brother; but I am sorry to hear you have given that worthy man cause for great uneasiness.

Char. Yes, I am told I do that to a great many worthy men—But how do you mean, brother?

Jos. Why, he thinks you have endeavoured to alienate the affections of Lady Teazle.

Char. Who, I alienate the affections of Lady Teazle?—Upon my word he accuses me very unjustly. What

has the old gentleman found out that he has got a young wife; or, what is worse, has the lady found out that she has got an old husband.

Jos. For shame, brother.

Char. 'Tis true, I did once suspect her ladyship had a partiality for me, but upon my soul I never gave her the least encouragement; for, you know my attachment was to Maria.

Jos. This will make Sir Peter extremely happy——
But if she had a partiality for you, sure you would not have been base enough——

Char. Why, look'ye, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonourable action; but if a pretty woman should purposely throw herself in my way, and that pretty woman should happen to be married to a man old enough to be her father——

Jos. What then?

Char. Why then, I believe I should——have occasion to borrow a little of your morality, brother.

Jos. O fie, brother——The man who can jest——

Char. Oh, that's very true, as you were going to observe.——But Joseph, do you know that I am surprised at your suspecting me with Lady Teazle. I thought you was always the favourite there.

Jos. Me!

Char. Why yes, I have seen you exchange such significant glances.

Jos. Pshaw!

Char. Yes I have; and don't you remember when I came in here, and caught you and her at——

Jos. I must stop him. (*Aside.*) (*Stops his mouth.*) Sir Peter has overheard every word that you have said.

Char. Sir Peter! where is he?——What, in the closet——'Foregad I'll have him out.

Jos. No, no. (*Stopping him.*)

Char. I will——Sir Peter Teazle, come into court.

Enter Sir PETER.

What, my old guardian turn inquisitor, and take evidence in cog.

Sir Pet. Give me your hand.—I own, my dear boy, I have suspected you wrongfully; but you must not be angry with Joseph; it was all my plot, and I shall think of you as long as I live for what I overheard.

Char. Then 'tis well you did not hear more. Is it not, Joseph?

Sir Pet. What, you would have retorted on Joseph, would you?

Char. And yet you might as well have suspected him as me. Might he not, Joseph?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. [*Whispering* Joseph.]-Lady Sneerwell, sir, is just coming up, and says she must see you.

Jos. Gentlemen, I must beg your pardon; I have company waiting for me; give me leave to conduct you down stairs.

Char. No, no, speak to them in another room; I have not seen Sir Peter a great while, and I want to talk with him.

Jos. Well, I'll send away the person and return immediately. Sir Peter, not a word of the little French milliner.

[*Aside and exit.*]

Sir Pet. Ah, Charles, what a pity it is you don't associate more with your brother, we might then have some hopes of your reformation; he's a young man of such sentiments—Ah, there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Char. Oh, he's too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, that, I dare say, he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir Pet. No, no, you accuse him wrongfully—Though Joseph is not a rake, he is no saint.

Char. Oh! a perfect anchorite—a young hermit.

Sir Pet. Hush, hush; don't abuse him, or he may chance to hear of it again.

Char. Why, you won't tell him, will you?

Sir Pet. No, no, but—I have a great mind to tell him.—[*Aside.*]-[*Seems to hesitate*]-Hark'ye, Charles, have you a mind for a laugh at Joseph?

Char. I should like it of all things—let's have it.

Sir Pet. Gad I'll tell him—I'll be even with Joseph for discovering me in the closet.—[*Aside.*]-Hark'ye, Charles, he had a girl with him when I called.

Char. Who, Joseph! impossible!

Sir Pet. Yes, a little French milliner, [*takes him to the front.*]-and the best of the joke is, she is now in the room.

Char. The devil she is!—Where?

Sir Pet. Hush, hush—behind the screen.

Char. I'll have her out.

Sir Pet. No, no, no.

Char. Yes.

Sir Pet. No.

Char. By the Lord I will—So now for it.

Both run up to the screen.—The screen falls, at the same time

JOSEPH enters.

Char. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's horrible!

Char. Sir Peter, this is the smartest little French milliner I ever saw.—But pray what is the meaning of all this? You seem to have been playing at hide and seek here, and for my part, I don't know who's in or who's out of the secret—Madam, will you please to explain?—Not a word! —Brother, is it your pleasure to illustrate?—Morality dumb too!—Well, though I can make nothing of it, I suppose you perfectly understand one another, good folks, and so I'll leave you. Brother, I am sorry you have given that worthy man so much cause for uneasiness—Sir Peter, there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment. —Ha, ha, ha! *[Exit.]*

Jos. Sir, Peter, notwithstanding appearances are against me—if—if you'll give me leave—I'll explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you please, sir.

Jos. Lady Teazle knowing my—Lady Teazle—I say—knowing my pretensions—to your ward—Maria—and—Lady Teazle—I say—knowing the jealousy of my—of your temper—she called in here—in order that she—that I—might explain—what these pretensions were—And—hearing you were coming—and—as I said before—knowing the jealousy of your temper—she—my Lady Teazle—I say—went behind the screen—and—This is a full and clear account of the whole affair.

Sir Pet. A very clear account truly! and I dare say the Lady will vouch for the truth of every word of it.

L. Teaz. *[Advancing]* For not one syllable, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. What the devil! don't you think it worth your while to agree in the lie?

L. Teaz. There's not one word of truth in what that gentleman has been saying.

Jos. Zounds, madam, you won't ruin me!

L. Teaz. Stand out of the way, Mr Hypocrite, I'll speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Aye, aye—let her alone—she'll make a better story of it than you did.

L. Teaz. I came here with no intention of listening to his addresses to Maria, and even ignorant of his pretensions; but seduced by his insidious arts, at least to listen to his addresses, if not to sacrifice his honour, as well as my own, to his unwarrantable desires.

Sir Pet. Now I believe the truth is coming, indeed.

Jos. What! is the woman mad?

L. Teaz. No, sir, she has recovered her senses. Sir Peter, I cannot expect you will credit me; but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am certain you did not know I was within hearing, has penetrated so deep into my soul, that could I have escaped the mortification of this discovery, my future life should have convinced you of my sincere repentance. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he pretended an honourable passion for his ward, I now view him in so despicable a light, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to his addresses. (*Exit*)

Jos. Sir Peter—Notwithstanding all this—Heaven is my witness——

Sir Pet. That you are a villain—and so I'll leave you to your meditations——

Jos. Nay, Sir Peter, you must not leave me—The man who shuts his ears against conviction——

Sir Pet. Oh, damn your sentiments—damn your sentiments.—— [*Exit. Joseph following.*]

A C T V.

SCENE, JOSEPH SURFACE's Apartments.

Enter JOSEPH and a SERVANT.

JOSEPH.

MR Stanley!—why should you think I would see Mr Stanley! you know well enough he comes in-treating for something.

Serv. They let him in before I knew of it; and old Rowley is with him.

Jos. Pshaw, you blockhead; I am so distracted with my own misfortunes, I am not in a humour to speak to any one—but shew the fellow up. [*Exit. Servant.*] Sure fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before—My character ruined with Sir Peter—my hopes of Maria lost—I'm in a pretty humour to listen to poor relations truly.—I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on old Stanley. Oh, here he comes; I'll retire, and endeavour to put a little charity in my face however.

[*Exit.*

Enter Sir OLIVER and ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. What, does he avoid us? That was him, was it not?

Rowl. Yes, sir; but his nerves are too weak to bear the sight of a poor relation: I should have come first to break the matter to him.

Sir Oliv. A plague of his nerves—yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of a most benevolent way of thinking.

Rowl. Yes—he has as much speculative benevolence as any man in the kingdom, though he is not so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliv. Yet he has a string of sentiments, I suppose, at his fingers ends.

Rowl. And his favourite one is, *That charity begins at home.*

Sir Oliv. And his, I presume, is of that domestick sort, which never stirs abroad at all.

Rowl. Well, sir, I'll leave you to introduce yourself as old Stanley; I must be here again to announce you in your real character.

Sir Oliv. True—and you'll afterwards meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowl. Without losing a moment. [*Exit Rowley.*

Sir Oliv. Here he comes—I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter JOSEPH.

Jos. Sir, your most obedient; I beg pardon for keeping you a moment—Mr Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliv. At your service, sir.

Jos. Pray, be seated, Mr Stanley, I intreat you, sir.

Sir Oliv. Dear sir, there's no occasion. Too ceremonious by half. [*Aside*

Jos. Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaint-

ance, I am very glad to see you look so well. I think, Mr Stanley, you was nearly related to my mother.

Sir Oliv. I was, sir; so nearly, that my present poverty I fear may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I would not presume to trouble you now.

Jos. Ah, sir, don't mention that—For the man who is in distress has ever a right to claim kindred with the wealthy; I am sure I wish I was of that number, or that it was in my power to afford you even a small relief.

Sir Oliv. If your uncle Sir Oliver was here, I should have a friend.

Jos. I wish he was, sir, you should not want an advocate with him, believe me.

Sir Oliv. I should not need one, my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty had enabled you to be the agent of his charities.

Jos. Ah, sir, you are mistaken; avarice, avarice, Mr Stanley, is the vice of age; to be sure it has been spread abroad that he has been very bountiful to me, but without the least foundation, though I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliv. And has he never remitted you bullion, rupees, or pagodas?

Jos. Oh, dear sir, no such thing. I have indeed received some trifling presents from him, such as shawls, avadavats, and India crackers; nothing more, sir.

Sir Oliv. There's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds! (*Aside.*) Shawls, avadavats, and India crackers!

Jos. Then there's my brother, Mr Stanley; one would scarce believe what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliv. Not I for one. (*Aside*)

Jos. Oh, the sums I have lent him!—Well, 'twas an amiable weakness—I must own I can't defend it, though it appears more blameable at present, as it prevents me from serving you, Mr Stanley, as my heart directs.

Sir Oliv. Dissembler—(*Aside*)—Then you cannot assist me.

Jos. I am very unhappy to say it is not in my power at present; but you may depend upon hearing from me when I can be of any service to you.

Sir Oliv. Sweet, sir, you are too good.

Jos. Not at all, sir; to pity without the power to relieve, is still more painful, than to ask and be denied. Indeed,

Mr Stanley, you have me deeply affected. Sir your most devoted; I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliv. Your ever grateful and perpetual (*bowing low*) humble servant.

Jos. I am extremely sorry, sir, for your misfortunes—Here, open the door—Mr Stanley, your most devoted.

Sir Oliv. Your most obliged servant. Charles, you are my heir. [*Aside, and exit.*]

Jos. This is another of the evils that attend a man's having so good a character—It subjects him to the impotency of the necessitous—the pure and sterling ore of charity is a very expensive article in the catalogue of a man's virtues; whereas the sentimental French plate I use, answers the purpose full as well, and pays no tax. [*Going.*]

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Mr Surface, your most obedient; I wait on you from your uncle who is just arrived. [*Gives him a note.*]

Jos. How! Sir Oliver arrived!—Here, Mr—— call back Mr Stanley.

Rowl. It's too late, sir, I met him going out of the house.

Jos. Was ever any thing so unfortunate! [*Aside.*]—I hope my uncle has enjoyed good health and spirits.

Rowl. Oh, very good, sir; he bid me inform you he'll wait on you within this half hour.

Jos. Present him my kind love and duty, and assure him I'm quite impatient to see him. [*Bowing.*]

Rowl. I shall, sir.

[*Exit Rowley.*]

Jos. Pray do, sir, (*Bows.*)—This was the most cursed piece of ill luck. [*Exit Joseph.*]

SCENE, Sir PETER'S House.

Enter Mrs CANDOUR and MAID.

Maid. Indeed, madam, my lady will see no one at present.

Mrs Cand. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs Candour?

Maid. I did, madam, and she begs to be excused.

Mrs Cand. Go again, for I am sure she must be greatly distressed. (*Exit Maid.*) How provoking to be kept wait-

ing—I am not mistress of half the circumstances:—I shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the parties names at full length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter Sir BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Mrs Cand. Oh, Sir Benjamin, I am glad you are come; have you heard of Lady Teazle's affair? Well, I never was so surprized—and I am so distressed for the parties.

Sir Benj. Nay, I can't say I pity Sir Peter, he was always so partial to Mr Surface.

Mrs Cand. Mr Surface! Why it was Charles.

Sir Benj. Oh, no, madam, Mr Surface was the gallant.

Mrs Cand. No, Charles was the lover; and Mr Surface, to do him justice, was the cause of the discovery: he brought Sir Peter; and —

Sir Benj. Oh, my dear madam, no such thing; for I had it from one —

Mrs Cand. Yes, and I had it from one, that had it from one that knew —

Sir Benj. And I had it from one —

Mrs Cand. No such thing—But here comes my Lady Sneerwell, and perhaps she may have heard the particulars.

Enter Lady SNEERWELL.

L. Sneer. Oh, dear Mrs Candour, here is a sad affair about our friend Lady Teazle.

Mrs Cand. Why, to be sure poor thing, I am much concerned for her.

L. Sneer. I protest so am I——though I must confess she was always too lively for me.

Mrs Cand. But she had a great deal of good nature.

Sir Benj. And had a very ready wit.

Mrs Cand. But do you know all the particulars. [*To Lady Sneerwell.*]

Sir Benj. Yet who could have suspected Mr Surface.

Mrs Cand. Charles you mean.

Sir Benj. No, Mr Surface.

Mrs Cand. Oh, 'twas Charles.

L. Sneer. Charles!

Mrs Cand. Yes, Charles.

Sir Benj. I'll not pretend to dispute with you, Mrs

Candour; but be it as it may, I hope Sir Peter's wounds won't prove mortal.

Mrs *Cand.* Sir Peter's wounds! what! did they fight! I never heard a word of that.

Sir *Benj.* No! —

Mrs *Cand.* No! —

L. *Sueter.* Nor I, a syllable; Do, dear Sir Benjamin, tell us.

Sir *Benj.* Oh, my dear madam, then you don't know half the affair — Why — why — I'll tell you — Sir Peter, you must know, had a long time suspected Lady Teazle's visits to Mr Surface.

Mrs *Cand.* To Charles you mean.

Sir *Benj.* No, Mr Surface — and upon going to his house, and finding Lady Teazle there, Sir, says Sir Peter, you are a very ungrateful fellow.

Mrs *Cand.* Aye, that was Charles.

Sir *Benj.* Mr Surface — And, old as I am, says he, I demand immediate satisfaction: Upon this, they both drew their swords, and to it they fell.

Mrs *Cand.* That must be Charles; for it is very unlikely that Mr Surface should fight him in his own house.

Sir *Benj.* 'Sdeath, madam, not at all. Lady Teazle, upon seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and was followed by Charles, calling out for hartshorn and water. They fought, and Sir Peter received a wound in his right side by the thrust of a small sword.

Enter CRABTREE.

Crab. Pistols! pistols! nephew.

Mrs *Cand.* Oh, Mr Crabtree, I am glad you are come; now we shall have the whole affair.

Sir *Benj.* No, no, it was a small sword, uncle.

Crab. Zounds, nephew, I say it was a pistol!

Sir *Benj.* A thrust in second through the small guts.

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax.

Sir *Benj.* But give me lieve, dear uncle, it was a small sword.

Crab. I tell you it was a pistol — Won't you suffer any body to know any thing but yourself. — It was a pistol, and Charles — —

Mrs *Cand.* Aye! I knew it was Charles.

Sir *Benj.* Mr Surface, uncle.

Crab. Why zounds! I say it was Charles; must no body

60 THE SCHOOL

Speak but yourself. I'll tell you how the whole affair was.

L. Sneer. }
Mrs Cand. } Aye do, do, pray tell us.

Sir Benj. I see my uncle knows nothing at all about the matter.

Crab. Mr Surface, you must know, ladies, came late from Salt-hill, where he had been the evening before with a particular friend of his, who has a son at Eaton; his pistols were left on the bureau, and unfortunately loaded, and on Sir Peter's taxing Charles——

Sir Benj. Mr Surface you mean.

Crab. Do, pray, nephew, hold your tongue, and let me speak sometimes.—I say, ladies, upon his taking Charles to account, and taxing him with the basest ingratitude——

Sir Benj. Aye, ladies, I told you Sir Peter taxed him with ingratitude.

Crab. They agreed each to take a pistol—They fired at the same instant——Charles's ball took place, and lodged in the thorax. Sir Peter's missed, and what is very extraordinary, the ball grazed against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the chimney, flew off through the window at right angles, and wounded the post man, who was just come to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benj. I heard nothing of all this! I must own, ladies, my uncle's account is more circumstantial, though I believe mine is the true one.

L. Sneer. I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

[Aside, and exit.

Sir Benj. Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Why, yes; they do say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs Cand. But pray where is Sir Peter now? I hope his wounds won't prove mortal.

Crab. He was carried home immediately, and has given positive orders to be denied to every body.

Sir Benj. And I believe Lady Teazle is attending him.

Mrs Cand. I do believe so too.

Crab. Certainly—I met one of the faculty as I came in.

Sir Benj. Gad so! and here he comes.

Crab. Yes, yes, that's the doctor.

Mrs Cand. That certainly must be the physician.——
Now we shall get information.

Enter Sir OLIVER SURFACE.

Dear doctor, how is your patient?

Sir Benj. I hope his wounds are not mortal.

Crab. Is he in a fair way of recovery?

Sir Benj. Pray, doctor, was he not wounded by a thrust of a sword through the small guts?

Crab. Was it not by a bullet that lodged in the thorax?

Sir Benj. Nay, pray answer me.

Crab. Dear, dear doctor speak. [*All pulling him.*]

Sir Oliv. Hey, hey, good people, are you all mad?——
Why, what the devil is the matter?——a sword through the small guts, and a bullet lodged in the thorax! What would you all be at?

Sir Benj. Then perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor.

Sir Oliv. If I am, sir, I am to thank you for my degree.

Crab. Only a particular friend, I suppose.

Sir Oliv. Nothing more, sir.

Sir Benj. Then I suppose, as you are a friend, you can be better able to give us some account of his wounds.

Sir Oliv. Wounds!

Mrs Cand. What! hav'n't you heard he was wounded—
The saddest accident!

Sir Benj. A thrust with a sword through the small guts.

Crab. A bullet in the thorax.

Sir Oliv. Good people, speak one at a time, I beseech you——You both agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Crab.

Sir Benj.

} Ay, ay, we both agree in that.

Sir Oliv. Then I will be bold to say, Sir Peter is one of the most imprudent men in the world, for here he comes walking as if nothing had happened.

Enter Sir PETER.

My good friend, you are certainly mad to walk about in this condition; you should go to bed, you that have had a

fword through your small guts, and a bullet lodged in your thorax.

Sir Pet. A fword through my small guts, and a bullet lodged in my thorax!

Sir Oliv. Yes, these worthy people would have killed you without law or physick, and wanted to dub me a doctor, in order to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. What is all this?

Sir Benj. Sir Peter, we are all very glad to find the story of the duel is not true.

Crab. And exceedingly sorry for your other misfortunes.

Sir Pet. So, so, all over the town already. (*Aside.*)

Mrs Cand. Though, as Sir Peter was so good a husband, I pity him sincerely.

Sir Pet. Plague of your pity.

Crab. As you continued so long a batchelor, you was certainly to blame to marry at all.

Sir Pet. Sir, I desire you'll consider this is my own house.

Sir Benj. However, you must not be offended at the jests you'll meet with on this occasion.

Crab. It is no uncommon case, that's one thing.

Sir Pet. I insist upon being master here; in plain terms I desire you'll leave my house immediately.

Mrs Cand. Well, well, sir, we are going, and you may depend upon it, we shall make the best of the story.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Benj. And tell how badly you have been treated.

Sir Pet. Leave my house directly. [*Exit Sir Benjamin.*]

Crab. And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit Crabtree.*]

Sir Pet. Leave my house, I say—Friends, furies, there is no bearing it!

Enter ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen my nephews.

Rowl. And Sir Oliver is convinced your judgment is right after all.

Sir Oliv. Aye, Joseph is the man.

Rowl. Such sentiments.

Sir Oliv. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowl. Oh, 'tis edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliv. He is a pattern for the young men of the age.—But how comes it, Sir Peter, that you don't join in his praises?

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, we live in a damn'd wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Sir Oliv. Right, right, my old friend—But was you always so moderate in your judgment?

Rowl. Do you say so, Sir Peter, you who was never mistaken in your life.

Sir Pet. Oh, plague of your jokes—I suppose you are acquainted with the whole affair.

Rowl. I am indeed, sir.—I met Lady Teazle returning from Mr Surface's, so humbled, that she deigned to beg even me to become her advocate.

Sir Pet. What! does Sir Oliver know it too?

Sir Oliv. Aye, aye, every circumstance.

Sir Pet. What! about the closet and the screen?

Sir Oliv. Yes, and the little French milliner too.—I never laughed more in my life.

Sir Pet. And a very pleasant jest it was.

Sir Oliv. This is your man of sentiment, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Oh, damn his sentiments.

Sir Oliv. You must have made a pretty appearance when Charles dragged you out of the closet.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, that was very diverting.

Sir Oliv. And egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down.

Sir Pet. My face when the screen was thrown down! Oh yes!—There's no bearing this. [*Aside.*]

Sir Oliv. Come, come, my old friend, don't be vexed, for I can't help laughing for the soul of me—Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Oh, laugh on—I am not vexed—no, no, it is the pleasantest thing in the world.—To be the standing jest of all one's acquaintance, 'tis the happiest situation imaginable.

Rowl. See, sir, yonder's my Lady Teazle coming this way, and in tears; let me beg of you to be reconciled.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll leave Rowley to meditate between you, and take my leave; but you must make haste after me to Mr Surface's, where I go, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy. [*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. I'll be with you at the discovery; I should like to see it, though it is a vile unlucky place for discoveries. —Rowley, (*looking out*) she's not coming this way.

Rowl. No, sir, but she has left the room door open, and waits your coming.

Sir Pet. Well, certainly mortification is very becoming in a wife.—Don't you think I had best let her pine a little longer.

Rowl. Oh, sir, that's being too severe.

Sir Pet. I don't think so; the letter I found from Charles was evidently intended for her.

Rowl. Indeed, *Sir Peter*, you are much mistaken.

Sir Pet. If I was convinced of that—see, master Rowley, she looks this way—what a remarkable elegant turn of the head she has—I have a good mind to go to her.

Rowl. Do, dear sir,

Sir Pet. But when it is known that we are reconciled, I shall be laughed at more than ever.

Rowl. Let them laugh on, and retort their malice upon themselves, by shewing them you can be happy in spite of their slander.

Sir Pet. Faith and so I will, master Rowley, and my Lady Teazle and I may still be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowl. O sye, *Sir Peter*, he that lays aside suspicion—

Sir Pet. My dear Rowley, if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter any thing like a sentiment again: I have had enough of that to last me the remainder of my life.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, JOSEPH'S Library.

Enter JOSEPH and Lady SNEERWELL.

L. Sneer. Impossible! Will not *Sir Peter* be immediately reconciled to Charles, and no longer oppose his union with Maria.

Jos. Can passion mend it?

L. Sneer. No, nor cunning neither. I was a fool to league with such a blunderer.

Jos. Sure, my Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer in this affair, and yet, you see, I bear it with calmness.

L. Sneer. Because the disappointment does not reach your heart; your interest only was concerned. Had you felt for Maria, what I do for that unfortunate libertine, your brother, you would not be dissuaded from taking every revenge in your power.

Jos. Why will you rail at me for the disappointment.

L. Sneer. Are you not the cause? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon *Sir Peter*, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavour to seduce his wife. I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Jos. Well, I own I am to blame—I have deviated from the direct rule of wrong. Yet, I cannot think circumstances are so bad as your ladyship apprehends.

L. Sneer. No!

Jos. You tell me you have made another trial of *Snake*, that he still proves steady to our interest, and that he is ready, if occasion requires, to swear to a contract having passed between *Charles* and your ladyship.

L. Sneer. And what then?

Jos. Why, the letters which have been so carefully circulated, will corroborate his evidence, and prove the truth of the assertion. But I expect my uncle every moment, and must beg your ladyship will retire into the next room.

L. Sneer. But if he should find you out.

Jos. I have no fear of that—*Sir Peter* won't tell for his own sake—and I shall soon find out *Sir Oliver's* weak side.

L. Sneer. Nay, I have no doubt of your abilities, only be constant to one villany at a time.

Jos. Well, I will, I will.—[*Exit Lady Sneerwell.*]
—It is confounded hard though, to be baited by one's confederates in wickedness—[*knocking*]
—Who have we got here? My uncle *Oliver* I suppose—Oh, old *Stanley* again! How came he here? He must not stay——

Enter Sir OLIVER.

I told you already, *Mr Stanley*, that it was not in my power to relieve you.

Sir Oliv. But I hear, sir, that *Sir Oliver* is arrived, and perhaps he might.

Jos. Well, sir; you cannot stay now, sir; but any other time, sir, you shall certainly be relieved.

Sir Oliv. Oh, *Sir Oliver* and I must be acquainted.

Jos. I must insist upon your going—Indeed, *Mr Stanley*, you can't stay.

Sir Oliv. Positively I must see *Sir Oliver*.

Jos. Then positively you shan't stay.

[*Pushing him out.*]

Enter CHARLES.

Char. Hey day! what's the matter? Why, who the devil have we got here! What, my little Premium. Oh, brother, you must not hurt my little broker. But hark ye, Joseph; what, have you been borrowing money too?

Jos. Borrowing money! No, brother.—We expect my uncle Oliver here every minute, and Mr Stanley insists upon seeing him.

Char. Stanley! Why his name is Premium.

Jos. No, no! I tell you his name is Stanley.

Char. But I tell you again his name is Premium.

Jos. It don't signify what his name is.

Char. No more it don't, as you say brother; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffee-houses. But old Noll must not come and catch my little broker here neither.

Jos. Mr Stanley, I beg ———

Char. And I beg, Mr Premium ———

Jos. You must go indeed, Mr Stanley.

Char. Aye, you must go, Mr Premium.

[Both pushing him.]

Enter Sir PETER, Lady TEAZLE, MARIA, and ROWLEY.

Sir Pet. What, my old friend Sir Oliver! what's the matter?—In the name of wonder, were there ever two such ungracious nephews, to assault their uncle at his first visit.

L. Teaz. On my word, sir, it was well we came to your rescue.

Jos. Charles!

Char. Joseph!

Jos. Now our ruin is complete.

Char. Very!

Sir Pet. You find, Sir Oliver, your necessitous character of old Stanley could not protect you.

Sir Oliv. No! nor Premium neither. The necessities of the former could not extract a shilling from that benevolent gentleman there; and with the other I stood a worse chance than my ancestors, and had like to have been knocked down without being bid for. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, look upon that elder nephew of mine; you both know what I have done for him, and how gladly I would have looked upon half my fortune as held only in trust for him. Judge then, of my surprize and disappoint-

ment, at finding him destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude. -

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, I should be as much surpris'd as you, if I did not already know him to be artful, selfish, and hypocritical.

L. Teaz. And if he pleads not guilty to all this, let him call on me to finish his character.

Sir Pet. Then I believe we need not add more; for if he knows himself, it will be a sufficient punishment for him that he is known by the world.

Char. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me by and by. [Aside.]

Sir Oliv. As for that profligate there——

[Pointing to Charles.]

Char. Ay, now comes my turn; the damn'd family pictures will ruin me. [Aside.]

Jos. Sir Oliver, will you honour me with a hearing.

Char. Now if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I should have time to recollect myself. [Aside.]

Sir Oliv. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

Jos. I trust I could, sir.

Sir Oliv. 'Pshaw! (*turns away from him*) and I suppose you could justify yourself too. [To Charles.]

Char. Not that I know of, sir.

Sir Oliv. What, my little Premium was let too much into the secret!

Char. Why yes, sir; but they were family secrets, and should go no further.

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Oliver, I am sure you cannot look upon Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliv. No, nor with gravity neither.——Do you know, Sir Peter, the young rogue has been selling me his ancestors; I have bought judges and staff officers by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as old china.

[During this speech Charles laughs behind his hat.]

Char. Why, that I have made free with the family canvas is true; my ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me when I tell you, (and upon my soul I would not say it if it was not so) if I don't appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is, because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction at seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

[Embraces him.]

Sir Oliv. Charles, I forgive you; give me your hand again; the little ill-looking fellow over the settee has made your peace for you.

Char. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

L. Teaz. *Sir Oliver*, here is another, with whom I dare say Charles is no less anxious to be reconciled.

Sir Oliv. I have heard of that attachment before, and with the lady's leave—if I construe right, that blush—

Sir Pet. Well, child, speak for yourself.

Mar. I have little more to say, than that I wish him happy; and for any influence I might once have had over his affections, I most willingly resign them to one who has a better claim to them.

Sir Pet. Hey! What's the matter now? While he was a rake and a profligate, you would hear of no body else; and now that he is likely to reform, you won't have him. What's the meaning of all this?

Mar. His own heart, and Lady Sneerwell, can best inform you.

Char. Lady Sneerwell!

Jos. I am very sorry, brother, I am obliged to speak to this point, but justice demands it from me; and Lady Sneerwell's wrongs can no longer be concealed.

Enter Lady SNEERWELL.

Sir Pet. Another French milliner!—I believe he has one in every room in the house.

L. Sncer. Ungrateful Charles! well you may seem confounded and surprized at the indelicate situation to which your perfidy has reduced me.

Char. Pray, uncle, is this another of your plots? for, as I live, this is the first I ever heard of it.

Jos. There is but one witness, I believe, necessary to the business.

Sir Pet. And that witness is Mr Snake—you were perfectly in the right in bringing him with you.—Let him appear.

Rowl. Desire Mr Snake to walk in.—It is rather unlucky, madam, that he should be brought to confront and not support your ladyship.

Enter SNAKE.

L. Sncer. I am surprized! what, speak villain! have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; I

must own you paid me very liberally for the lies in question, but I have unfortunately been offered double for speaking the truth.

Sir Pet. Plot and counter-plot—I give your ladyship much joy of your negociation.

L. Sneer. May the torments of despair and disappointment light upon you all! [*Going.*]

L. Teaz. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, give me leave to return you thanks, for the trouble you and this gentleman took, in writing letters in my name to Charles, and answering them yourself;—and, at the same time, I must beg you will present my compliments to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle, licentiate, returns the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

L. Sneer. You too, madam! Provoking insolent!—may your husband live these fifty years. [*Exit.*]

L. Teaz. O Lord——what a malicious creature it is.

Sir Pet. Not for the last wish, I hope.

L. Teaz. Oh, no, no.

Sir Pet. Well, sir——what have you to say for yourself. —[*To Joseph.*]

Jos. Sir, I am so confounded that Lady Sneerwell should impose upon us all, by suborning Mr Snake, that I know not what to say—but—lest her malice should prompt her to injure my brother—I had better follow her. [*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. Moral to the last.

Sir Oliv. Marry her, Joseph, marry her if you can——Oil and vinegar—you'll do very well together.

Rowl. Mr Snake, I believe we have no further occasion for you.

Snake. Before I go, I must beg pardon of these good ladies and gentlemen, for whatever trouble I have been the humble instrument of causing.

Sir Pet. You have made amends by your open confession.

Snake. But I must beg it as a favour that it may never be spoke of.

Sir Pet. What! are you ashamed of having done one good action in your life.

Snake. Sir, I request you to consider that I live by the badness of my character, and if it was once known that

I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world. [Exit.]

Sir Oliv. Never fear, we shan't traduce you by saying any thing in your praise.

Sir Pet. There's a specious rogue for you.

L. Teaz. You see, Sir Oliver, it needed no great persuasion to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliv. So much the better; I'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir Pet. What, before you ask the girl's consent.

Char. I have done that a long time since—above a minute ago—and she looked—

Mar. O fie, Charles—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word said.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, the less the better (*joining their hands*) there—and may your love never know abatement.

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together, as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do.

Char. I suspect, Rowley, I owe much to you.

Sir Oliv. You do, indeed.

Rowl. Sir, if I had failed in my endeavours to serve you, you would have been indebted to me for the attempt.—But deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir Pet. Aye, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Char. Look ye, Sir Peter, as to reforming, I shall make no promises, and that I take to be the strongest proof that I intend setting about it. But here shall be my monitor, my gentle guide—can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, should'st wave the beauty's sway,

Thou still must rule, because I will obey;

An humble fugitive from folly view,

No sanctuary near but love—and you.

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,

For even scandal dies—if you approve.



P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr GARRICK.

A SCHOOL for Scandal! Tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school, this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now—the knowing think—
We might as well be taught to eat and drink:
Caus'd by a dearth of scandal, should the vapours
Distress our fair ones, let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit,
Crave what they will, there's *quantum sufficit*.

"Lord!" cries my Lady *Wormwood*, (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle)
Just ris'n at noon, all night at cards, when threshing
Strong tea and scandal—bless me, how refreshing!
"Give me the papers, *Lisp*—how bold and free! (*sips*)
"Last night Lord L. (*sips*) was caught with Lady D.
"For aching heads, what charming *sal volatile*! (*sips*)
"If *Mrs B.* will still continue flirting,
"We hope she'll *draw*, or we'll *undraw*, the curtain.—
"Fine satire, *poz!* in public all abuse it;
"But, by ourselves, (*sips*) our praise we can't refuse it.
"Now, *Lisp*, read you—there at that dash and star—
"Yes, ma'am—A certain Lord had best beware,
"Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor-square:
"For should he Lady W. find willing—
"Wormwood is bitter."—"Oh! that's me—the villain!
"Throw it behind the fire, and never more
"Let that vile paper come within my door."

Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach *our* feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full spring tide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner *rais'd* than *laid*.
So strong, so swift the monster, there's no gagging;
Cut scandal's head off—still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles, once lavishly bestow'd,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
To shew his gratitude, he draws his pen,
And seeks this Hydra, scandal, in its den;
From his fell gripe the frightened fair to save—
Tho' he should fall, th'attempt must please the brave.
For your applause, all perils he would through;
He'll fight—that's write—a cavaliero true,
Till ev'ry drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt for you.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by Mr COLEMAN.

Spoken in the Character of LADY TEAZLE.

I, WHO was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind must now blow all one way;

E P I L O G U E.

Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one old rusty weather-cock—my spouse;
So wills our virtuous bard—the pye-ball'd Bayes
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays.

Old batchelors, who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate your lives!
Each bring his dear to town—all faults upon her—
London will prove the very source of honour;
Plung'd fairly in, like a cold bath, it serves,
When principles relax—to brace the nerves.
Such is my case—and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er;
And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife.
Born with a genius for the highest life,
Like me, untimely blasted in her bloom;
Like me, condemn'd to such a dismal doom;
Save money—when I just knew how to waste it!
Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early crowing cock?
The melancholy ticking of a clock?
In the lone rustick hall for ever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
With humble curates can I now retire,
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire)
And at back-gammon mortify my soul,
That pants for Lu, or flutters at a Vole?
Seven's the main! dear sound! that must expire,
Lost at hot-cockles round a Christmas fire!
The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
“ Farewel the tranquil mind, farewel content!
“ Farewel the plumed head—the cushion'd *tete*,
“ That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
“ The spirit stirring drum! eardrums I mean—
“ Spadille, old Trick, Pam, Basto, King and Queen!
“ And you, ye knockers, that with brazen throat,
“ The welcome visitor's approach denote,
“ Farewel! All quality of high renown,
“ Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town,
“ Farewel! your revels I partake no more,
“ And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!”
All this I told our bard, he smil'd, and said, 'twas clear
I ought to play deep tragedy next year:
Mean while he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalk'd away.
“ Blest were the fair, like you her faults who stopt,
“ And clos'd her follies when the curtain dropt!
“ No more in vice or error to engage,
“ Or play the fool at large on life's great stage!”

F

S.



